CONCEPTUAL BLENDING AND BECOMING AS TOOLS FOR INTERPRETING CHORAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERFORMANCES: LESSONS FROM MEREDITH MONK’S BOOK OF DAYS

BY

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The cognitive integration networks of Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner offer a framework for understanding multimedia performance. Drawing on these conceptual blending networks, specifically the mirror, single-scope, and double-scope networks, this paper illustrates a continuum of multidisciplinary performance. While the phrase mixed media refers to performances where media retain their independent characteristics (mirror network), multimedia references media relationships that develop a new emergent content (double-scope network). While Fauconnier and Turner approach the creation of this emergent content from a cognitive perspective, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari offer an experiential model of becoming that relates to the content of the emergent structure. Content deemed non-representational through this becoming process is considered multisensory and requires the interpretation of an audience; it is an extension of the multidisciplinary performance continuum. Representational content restricts the need for interpretation because the media of a performance make their intentions obvious.

To illustrate focal nodes along this multidisciplinary performance continuum, Fauconnier and Turner’s conceptual blending model and Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of becoming are applied to excerpts of Meredith Monk’s film Book of Days.
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INTRODUCTION

Meredith Monk’s *Book of Days* (1988), a work for voice, dancers, actors, and film, portrays an orthodox Jewish girl from the Middle Ages, Eva, adorned from head to toe in heavy black garments. She confesses to her grandfather her visions of “shiny birds” flying through the sky that leave silver marks across the atmosphere, of women walking in the streets wearing few clothes, and of large carriages “with no horses.” In an authoritative tone, the grandfather initially paints these visions as ancient images, the ark of Noah, and a harlot and people fleeing God. He asks her to confess to him alone should the dreams return.¹

Tension between Christian and Jewish cultures is an undercurrent in the film. In addition to stark differences in attire that identify Christian and Jewish villagers, a decree in the village’s marketplace reads:

> Jews shall pass their lives among Christians quietly and without disorder. Jews are forbidden to dare to leave their house or quarters on Good Friday. No Christian, man or woman, shall live with a Jew. No compulsion shall be brought to bear upon Jews on Saturday. Jews shall bear certain marks in order that they may be known: a circle of yellow upon outer clothing. Jews must not pursue any manual trade. Jews are forbidden the smelting of gold and silver. Jews are allowed to lend out money on proper pledges.²

Eva, her family, and a local crone, a woman who is marginalized and lives in a cave on the periphery of the village, are all Jewish. The crone is the only one who acknowledges Eva’s visions. As a plague overtakes the village and Christian and Jewish people die violently and suddenly, the Christians blame and attempt to attack the Jewish quarter. A single priest subverts the angry mob and sends the crowd home.

Eva acts as the film’s guide as Meredith Monk intercuts images of the Middle

² Ibid., 13:57.
³ Deborah Jowitt, “Introduction,” in *Meredith Monk*, ed. Deborah Jowitt (Baltimore: John’s Hopkins
Ages with film of 1980s New York City. In Eva the audience constructs a notion that contemporary life is not far removed from ten centuries earlier. Eva embodies two independent environments, past and present, and while we know she does not live alongside taxicabs and subways, audiences are invited to compare the contrasting images and construct a third interstitial realm. This tertian stratum is new and contains elements of her homeland and of her visions, but it is neither. Eva becomes timeless and materially present embodying attributes of her future and our past simultaneously. She becomes multidimensional and her composite character emerges from the dueling realities. The collocation of ancient and modern myths in *Book of Days* creates perspective discomfort and forces a psychological reconciliation that forms a new structure and ultimately a new content not present in the previous ostensible strata.

Audiences intuitively recognize that the crux of this important work lies in the psychological reconciliation of past and present realities through Eva’s character and her ability to absorb elements from the fractured array of images and narratives. The present essay investigates some of the tools employed by Meredith Monk to create Eva’s emergent character and, more generally, the conditions of multidisciplinary choral performances.

**Definitions**

Multidisciplinary art presents unique challenges not only of identification and definition, but also of the interpretation of amalgamated structures similar to Eva’s character. Monk’s credo expresses this quandary succinctly: “I work in between the cracks, where the voice starts dancing, where the body starts singing, where theater
becomes cinema.”3 We are compelled to lean forward to ask what are Monk’s intentions and to discover how she arrived at this moment of artistic liberation and multidisciplinary awareness.

Not surprisingly, the scholarship addressing interdisciplinary art and especially works where music is a powerful medium is populated by controversial and occasionally polarized opinions. This essay focuses on selected concepts and tools that serve well in understanding the work of Meredith Monk, and specifically, Book of Days.

The terms multidisciplinary, multimedia, and multisensory are often employed interchangeably to describe any combination of music, visual projection, dance, theater, film, and light art.4 Artists and audiences overlook the differences in these terms that potentially shape their performance experience. While all terms imply the stimulation of multiple senses by multiple media, they refer to three different, though often complementary, phenomena. By multidisciplinary performance I refer to the coexistence of multiple artistic languages in a single work. The audience receives no specific compositional intention manifested by this coalescence, rather, the performance utilizes multiple forms of discrete communications media. By multimedia performance I refer to events where multiple art forms fuse into a new composite medium. There is authorial intention directed at the perceiver in this coalescence. It is vital that an emergent structure, narrative process, or new content arise from the juxtaposed media that is not present in the individual component media. The alternatives to multimedia performance are concerts, theatrical productions, or visual events where each medium retains its

4 There exists a multiplicity of terms to describe mixed media performances. This essay chooses to use these terms to suggest specific theoretical and performative differentiations.
individual identities and characteristics, or what I refer to as mixed-media performances.

Multimedia performance is a subgenre of the broader typology of multidisciplinary performance.

By multisensory performance I suggest a term that implies the construction of unrestricted interpretive possibilities that are stimulated by multiple sensory inputs. The term describes multimedia performances where potential audience interpretive possibilities are abundant; a surplus of interpretations is available because the content of the work is non-representational. An interpretive continuum of potentiality exists with surplus, non-representational content on one end and rigidly representational content on the other. The alternative to multisensory performance is a multimedia work where one or more media restrict or direct the number of potential interpretations available for audiences. Under these circumstances the content of the performance becomes representationally derivative. The media of multisensory performances do not reveal ostensibly the central idea of an artwork, while the media of mixed-media performances explicate one another and expose unambiguous content with reliably predictable interpretations. The obscuring process is only possible because the emergent structure of multimedia performance is a potentiality. Multisensory performance is, therefore, a specialization within multimedia performance.

I employ the phrase multidisciplinary performance as the broad category that encompasses mixed media, multimedia, and multisensory performances. Multimedia performance is a subcategory with multisensory performance as a further specialization. Figure I-1 illustrates this taxonomy; arrows suggest the flexible nature of these definitions.
This discussion will address some critical concepts in music-focused multidisciplinary performance. It begins with a historical overview in Chapter One, followed by an appropriation of the cognitive model of *conceptual blending* as a tool for encountering multimedia performance in Chapter Two. Chapter Three illustrates a method for determining a performance’s potentiality for open ended or restricted interpretations, non-representational or representational content. Models of multimedia and multisensory performances are applied to excerpts from Meredith Monk’s *Book of Days* in Chapter Four. Chapter Five attempts to draw broad guidelines for the creation and performance of multidisciplinary, multimedia, and multisensory performances within choral environments.
CHAPTER 1
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Exploring the Light-Sound Spectrum

Early cross-disciplinary musical experiments concentrated on the translation of musical ideas into light phenomena. In the fourth century B.C.E. Aristotle suggested that the frequencies of sound were analogous to the frequencies of visible light. He wrote:

We may regard all these colours as analogous to the sounds that enter into music, and suppose that those involving simple numerical ratios, like the concords in music, may be those generally regarded as most agreeable; as, for example, purple, crimson, and some few such colours.”

The conflation of sound and light frequencies persisted for centuries and provided inspiration for many composers and visual artists from the ancient Greeks to Scriabin. Despite physicist Albert Michelson and chemist Edward Morley negating this theory in 1887, the theory of luminiferous aether, early musings by Plato, Pythagoras, Newton, and later Goethe inspired a continuous and entrenched current of musicians interested in bridging the music-light divide well into our current century. Early twentieth century light-artist Thomas Wilfred remarked on this false premise, “even if we succeed in getting deep, basso profundo rumblings from a Rembrandt and high, plaintive howls from a Picasso, we shall have proved nothing, except that we might have used our time and energy to better advantage.”

18th century Jesuit philosopher and musician Louis Bertrand Castel developed the ocular harpsichord. Each struck key of the instrument's keyboard, instead of producing

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sound, unlocked a shutter that revealed a colored lens illuminated by candlelight, thrusting diffuse colors upon a white screen.\textsuperscript{8} Bainbridge Bishop, 19\textsuperscript{th} century American painter and inventor, advanced Castel’s silent instrument adding electric lights and a mechanism that afforded music and color to be played simultaneously and individually. Performers of the ocular harpsichord dwelled in silence, despite “playing” pre-composed music of Baroque masters.\textsuperscript{9} Compositions performed solely in colored lights were presumed to be distinguishable by their unique pattern of colors; colors here were treated as musical tones. Because it was believed that sound and light traveled using the same physical wavelengths, Bishop and Alexander Wallace Rimington, inventor and professor of fine arts at Queen’s College in London, believed that a work’s content remained consistent while the medium of expression could be variable.\textsuperscript{10}

The color-organ reached its climax with Alexander Wallace Rimington, who in 1895 gave live performances in tandem with Wagner’s \textit{Rienzi Overture}. The ultimate problem with the instrument was that there was no definition to the emitted light, only an endless succession of vague colors in rapid procession. Critics noted that this scattered spectacle was difficult for the eye to focus upon.\textsuperscript{11}

The earliest example of mainstream classical music deliberately composed for colored light is Alexander Scriabin’s tone poem \textit{Prometheus: Poem of Fire} (1910). Scriabin’s influences include a deep spiritual mysticism (a fascination with Lucifer – the Bringer of Light), the literature and paintings of the Russian Symbolists and the

\textsuperscript{8} Peacock, 400.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., 401.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 401-2.
\textsuperscript{11} Wilfred, 249.
teachings of Theosophy. Theosophy not only seeks the synthesis of the world’s religions and the reconciliation of science and spirituality, but also teaches that the body produces colored auras that vary with one’s mental state (red – anger, green-envy and so forth). Scriabin is often grouped with Messiaen and Rimsky-Korsakov as a synesthetic artist, though his color hearing was self-constructed around a network of logical associations and not by actual sensorial stimulation. Specific harmonic areas were associated with unique colors. Scriabin’s color hearing began with three associations: C - red, D – yellow, and F# - blue. Using the cycle of fifths, the composer then divided the remaining divisions of the visible spectrum (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet) across the chromatic scale.

Prometheus: Poem of Fire is orchestrated for expanded orchestra, solo piano, wordless choir dressed in white, and a specially designed light-organ called luce. Spanning a major ninth, the color-organ uses traditional musical notation, yet Scriabin includes no indications of what colors result from the depression of individual keys or whether chords produce a single blended color or a juxtaposition of several hues. Premiered in 1911, the original organ developed to perform the luce part malfunctioned moments prior to the performance. Not until a 1915 performance at Carnegie Hall would the color-organ part be fully realized.

Two voices comprise the luce's part. The upper voice follows the melodic strands

14 Baker, 102.
of the orchestra and illustrates salient key-areas. The lower voice ascends chromatically through an octave beginning on F# using the resulting colors to signify specific narrative and structural underpinnings within the music. The work is visually unified; bright and glaring blue hues begin and conclude the tone poem\textsuperscript{16} and symbolize the spiritual infinity of man, a concept first coined by Wassily Kandinsky in his 1912 treatise \textit{Über das Geistlige in der Kunst} ("den Menschen in das Unendliche").\textsuperscript{17} An additional potential visual-aural unification occurs when the chorus enters in the final section of the work singing only vowels, perhaps in homage to Symbolist poet Alexander Rimbaud’s poem \textit{Vowels} (1871), which attributes specific colors to each of the five French vowels.\textsuperscript{18}

\begin{quote}
A black, E white, I red, U green, O blue: vowels,
I shall tell, one day, of your mysterious origins:
A, black velvety jacket of brilliant flies
which buzz around cruel smells,

Gulfs of shadow; E, whiteness of vapours and of tents,
lances of proud glaciers, white kings, shivers of cow-parsley;
I, purples, spat blood, smile of beautiful lips
in anger or in the raptures of penitence;

U, waves, divine shudderings of viridian seas,
the peace of pastures dotted with animals, the peace of the furrows
which alchemy prints on broad studious foreheads;

O, sublime Trumpet full of strange piercing sounds,
silences crossed by [Worlds and by Angels]:
– O the Omega! the violet ray of [His] Eyes!\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}

The New York City premiere of the complete symphony in 1915 attempted to realize Scriabin’s desire to “bathe the audience in rhythmical light.”\textsuperscript{20} The \textit{chromola},

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{16} Based on knowledge of Scriabin’s color associations as no legend of color and notes is provided in the score.\
\textsuperscript{17} Danuta Mirka, “Colors of a Mystic Fire: Light and Sound in Scriabin’s ‘Prometheus,’” \textit{American Journal of Semiotics} 13 (Fall 1996): 238-9.\
\textsuperscript{18} Baker, 97.\
\textsuperscript{19} Angel Flores, \textit{The Anchor Anthology of French Poetry: From Nerval to Valery in English Translation} (New York, Anchor Books, 2000), 113.\
\textsuperscript{20} Baker, 104.
\end{flushright}
another light-organ designed specifically for the Carnegie Hall premier, was positioned within the orchestra. It held only the fifteen keys Scriabin required and two pedals that controlled the intensity of the light. Colors were projected onto long, narrow gauze strips that hung above the orchestra. Creating motion, the lights traveled along a motorized track that allowed the colors to continually mix in an endless variety of combinations. One review noted that the audience was submerged in darkness for the performance, which was subsequently repeated so the “spectators could take in the revolutionary significance of it.”

Critics found the colors vibrant and imaginative yet entirely unrelated to the aural experience. A reviewer for the New York Times wrote “[the lights] were continually shifting and melting, but without visible relation to the sound.”

It is likely that the motorized ellipsoidal path the lights traversed obfuscated the integrated nature of the colors and harmonic progressions. The lack of form or shape in the projected lights made the colors diffuse and difficult to discern. Additionally, the absence of a rhythmic relationship between the music and lights likely disguised any intended visible connection to the music.

The American premiere of Scriabin’s complete *Prometheus* concept was greeted with limited success; since the advent of laser technologies, revivals of the work now receive great acclaim. Theories of color-music like those of Scriabin endured in the revolutionary *Clavilux* by light-artist Thomas Wilfred and the *Lumigraph* (a home

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22 Ibid.
24 Both the Clavilux and the Lumigraph were partially commercialized light instruments.
color organ) by filmmaker and special effects pioneer Oskar Fischinger.

The most influential and widely successful light-artist of the last two centuries, Thomas Wilfred, began his pursuits endeavoring to remedy Alexander Rimington’s shapeless light projections as well as those of the 1915 chromola debut in Scriabin’s Prometheus. Wilfred abandoned earlier ideas of direct connections between color and music and developed his own three-tiered approach to light projection, called lumia, which focused on color, form, and motion. Based in New York City, Wilfred’s visual compositions garnered widespread acclaim among art critics and audiences and within a year of his 1922 debut he was touring the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. His notoriety earned him celebrity status. Corporations sought endorsements via his light-art, yet he refused all invitations for commercial work including offers from stocking, chewing gum, laxative, and cigarette companies. Wilfred feared the exploitation of what he believed to be the emergence of the eighth fine art (in addition to grammar, rhetoric, dialectic logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music).

Committed to the development of a younger generation of lumia artists, Wilfred established the Art Institute of Light at the base of New York City’s Grande Central Palace in 1930. Holding daily recitals and lectures, the institute attracted many casual artists desiring to develop lumia further. The Institute remained active until World War II, when the Grand Central Palace was commandeered by the US military.

Wilfred initially envisioned his light-art as a complement to live or recorded music, but after several disappointing collaborations he detached lumia from music altogether, creating a silent and kinetic art. Long-time supporter and owner of a Clavilux
Jr., the home version of Wilfred’s projection device, Leopold Stokowski, conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, commissioned Wilfred to compose lumia to accompany a performance of Rimsky-Korsakov’s Scheherazade. In February of 1926 the Philadelphia Orchestra at Carnegie Hall presented an evening of lumia with Stokowski and Wilfred at the helm. Colors and rhythmic lumia were projected on to a white scrim that fully concealed the orchestra. Critics found the experiment rich with possibility, though an art in its nascent years. Olin Downes, music critic for the New York Times wrote:

There were some extremely beautiful and suggestive moments, particularly in the first part of the suite where one might think of the sea…here Mr. Wilfred flung upon the screen color-color of an extraordinary gorgeousness and in wild movement…The color did not merely enhance the orchestral effect, but often distracted the attention from it, with results artistically unprofitable. But it is easy to believe that it indicates an important field for future development.”

While the Art Institute of Light pioneered over a decade of lumia performances, Wilfred pursued few projects involving music after 1926. Conversely, Stokowski’s fascination in combining music with images and light became heightened and led to the development of Walt Disney’s highly acclaimed 1941 film Fantasia.

Wilfred achieved stunningly vibrant colors and shapes that evolved, dissolved, and transformed with effortless liquidity. His accomplishments in light-art positioned lumia on the artistic map and paved the way for a generation of light/visual artists led by Dab Flavin and Rockne Krebs, who continued to pursue his ideals of a balance between color, form, and motion. The idea of connecting music and light did not die out completely, however.

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**Schoenberg’s Color Crescendo**

Composed just prior to the light-art of Wilfred and Scriabin’s *Prometheus, Die glückliche Hand* (1910-1913) [The Fortunate Hand], Arnold Schoenberg’s one-act opera attempts to fully integrate music, libretto, scenery, lighting, costumes, blocking, and even posture to advance a cohesive narrative scheme. Schoenberg composed the music and libretto and left explicit directions for lighting, scenery, stage blocking, and costumes. The opera chronicles the plight of a brilliant male artist isolated from the world around him. The work begins with the protagonist lying on his back with a griffin-like creature, ‘a hyena with enormous, bat wings,’ crouching upon him, teeth sunk into his neck. The artist longs for happiness and companionship, yet a chorus of faces whispers “You, who have the divine in you, and covet the world! You cannot win.” A beautiful young woman offers the artist a drink; as he quenches his thirst, the monster disappears yet the woman turns away and leaves him for an elegantly dressed man. Delusionally believing that he holds the young woman forever, the artists stares fixedly at his hands and does not notice her return. The woman leaves him yet again for the same man. In desperation, the artist climbs a rock reaching toward the window of the couple; the woman pushes the rock and as it tumbles it morphs into the monster from the opening scene and the artist is once again besieged with misery. Schoenberg suggests that the title of the work, occasionally translated as *The Fateful Hand*, refers to one who “tries to grasp that which can only slip away from you, if you hold it.”\(^\text{29}\)

Schoenberg describes his use of lights, gesture, scenery, costumes, and music as

“making music with the media of the stage.”

Perhaps the most significant and readily noticeable implementation of this notion is the ‘color crescendo,’ an upwelling of light intensity and color that begins with total darkness in the opening scene and escalates from ‘shadowy’ light towards bright light, finally reaching a glaring yellow light at the end of the third scene. In addition to the crescendi of light and color, a traditional swell by the full orchestra is accompanied by an increase in musical texture, dynamics, tempo, and the tessitura of the protagonist. A wind machine engages as the artist is found climbing the rock reaching for the woman, adding the element of ascending height.

Schoenberg wrote of this moment, “the crescendo is clothed externally in the form of an increasing pain.”

Second only to the music, color is integral to the symbolism of the opera. The young woman is garbed in violet and wears red and yellow roses in her hair. Theorist Edward Latham notes that purple is a mixture of red, the color of blood, fire, anger, and desire, and blue, the color of water, coolness, and peace. The yellow color of the diadem symbolizes artistic excellence while the monstrous creature, the Farbeltier, glows a ‘dazzling green light,’ the color of envy. The protagonist is dressed in black, symbolizing despair, ignorance, and darkness of the soul. These colors are integrated into the scenery, props, lighting, and costumes of the characters. Relationships between characters are often implied by the use and transformation of these colors.

Schoenberg, who labeled himself both a Brahmsian and Wagnerian, sought to

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30 Ibid.
32 Schoenberg, 32-35.
33 Latham, 188.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
create a Gesamtkunstwerk (total artwork), not only a synesthetic experience, but one that truly combined stimulations of all the senses. Such an artwork could be considered a combination of the work of the Symbolists, Realists, and Romantics. Reflecting on the opera, Schoenberg suggested that he aimed to initiate an artistic revolution not by radically altering any one element, but by recombining the existing arts, “the effect of such changes within the work of art is equivalent to the change of the course of a planet.”

The compositions and artistic statements of Schoenberg, Scriabin, and Wilfred by no means stand as anomalies. The notion of a unified art form, embodied in Richard Wagner’s concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk, permeated the realms of literature, visual art, and theater of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Arthur Rimbaud’s poem Vowels equates colors with specific vowels while the paintings of Georgia O’Keeffe, MacDonald Wright, Wassily Kandinsky, and many others visually explore musical forms in paint and the connection between pitch and color. Just as Schoenberg was an accomplished visual artist, Kandinsky was an artist, musician, and adept writer. Kandinsky is often quoted as stating: “Color is the keyboard, the eyes are the harmonies, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand that plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul.”

While Schoenberg depended upon this new appreciation of music, color, and other media, Kandinsky’s version of a Wagnerian Gesamtkunstwerk, his theatrical work Der gelbe Klang (1909) [The Yellow Sound or Chord], led him to purposefully discourage external and narrative connections between

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36 Schoenberg, 32-35.  
37 Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, 1911 (Toronto, General Publishing Company, Ltd., 1977), 32.
combined artistic media.\textsuperscript{38} Kandinsky rejected Realist and Symbolist drama where Schoenberg embraced it. \textit{The Yellow Sound} stirs the emotions with a simulated synesthetic experience where colors, sounds, and movement equate directly to psychological states and emotions.\textsuperscript{39} As will be delineated in Chapter Three, Kandinsky creates a multisensory performance by transferring the meaning of one medium directly into a second thereby preserving non-representational content.

Predating all of these musical extra-sensory experiences, P.N. Roinard’s Parisian production titled \textit{Song of Songs of Solomon} in 1891 used aerators to spread scents throughout the audience while interpreting the Song of Solomon. According to the annotated libretto, the scenes are accompanied with music that begins in C major and cycles diatonically throughout the eight segments of the text; likewise, colors are associated with each scene and phase through the visible spectrum, Red-Orange-Yellow-Green-Blue-Indigo-Violet. Finally, scents were coupled with each scene. Unfortunately, the intended effects were masked due to poor ventilation in the theater; the collecting scents created a putrid odor.\textsuperscript{40}

The works of Schoenberg, Scriabin, Wilfred, and Kandinsky spurred a generation of multidisciplinary artists that continued to explore the interacting relationships of music, color, and light. Yet, it was at this moment of great interdisciplinary experimentation in the first half of the twentieth century that classical music retreated to safer shores behind the backdrop of the musical “purity” of absolute music shunning most multidisciplinary pursuits for almost forty years. The realms of modern dance and

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
theater forged ahead and remain well beyond present day classical music’s reach.

**Multidisciplinary Theater**

While modern dance broke with much of the past, theatrical artists looked to Richard Wagner’s concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* as a critical moment in the progress of multidisciplinary performance. Chronicling the history of multidisciplinary performance from a theatrical perspective, Rosemary Klich and Edward Scheer point to Wagner’s 1849 essay *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (The Artwork of the Future) as the inspiration for director Adolph Appia’s revolutionary productions.\(^{41}\) Wagner writes, “Artistic Man can only fully content himself by uniting every branch of Art into the common Artwork.”\(^{42}\) Appia developed these ideas further and ultimately advocated for the dissolution of the fourth wall in the theater, the breakdown of hierarchy between actor and audience. He called his new art form ‘living art’ and intended it to create a new ‘spirit of community’ across all the arts.\(^{43}\)

As the effects of the second industrial revolution in Europe spread into the theater, Italian Futurist poets Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Emilio Settimelli, and Bruno Corra published *The Futurist Synthetic Theater* (1915) where they suggested that technological advances of industry must be reflected in theatrical productions. Primary to any production was audience participation through technology. Such Futurist Theater was to be ‘synthetic’ (brief), ‘atechnical’ (rejecting traditional theories of acting and

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\(^{41}\) Rosemary Klich and Edward Scheer, *Multimedia performance* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 20. Appia designed and staged his own productions of Wagner’s operas including *Tristan und Isolde*. He was heavily influenced by the work of Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, believing that all physical gesture must arise from the score and text.


\(^{43}\) Klich, 20.
expression), ‘dynamic’ (improved or developed within minutes of performance), and ‘autonomous,’ ‘alogical,’ and ‘unreal’ (without logic).44

Futurist Theater springs from two very vital currents…our frenetic passion for modern, fast, fragmentary, elegant, complicated, cynical, muscular, fleeting, futurist life; our completely modern intellectual concept of art, according to which no logic, no tradition, no aesthetic, no technique, no opportunity can be imposed upon the genius of the artist.45

Marinetti, Settimelli, and Corra proposed that our fast-paced culture is defined generationally by evolving technology.

By midcentury, experimental theater had entered a period of non-narrative performance exploration. In the 1970s the Fluxus Movement, comprised of influential musicians, writers, theater directors, and film artists such as Yoko Ono, Joseph Beuys, and Nam June Paik, took their lead from composer-philosopher artists such as John Cage by absorbing notions of indeterminacy and chance operation. Robert Wilson’s production of Philip Glass’s non-narrative opera Einstein on the Beach (1976) coined the phrase Theater of Images for its use of film and photographs in the production. Wilson interpreted the motoric repetition of Glass’ score as a vehicle for the “re-ordering of perceptual habits of his audiences.”46 Media theorist Joseph Birringer writes:

The fascinated lingering attachment of the images frozen in repetition frees the performances from linear narrative, from temporality, from rhetorical functions, from structurable scenes of desire, from recognizable references to history, from anything in particular…The reviewer can no longer coherently interpret the over-coded “scene.” And if the mind can no longer listen to, or find a point of view for, the hyperproduction of images and signifiers, canceling a hermeneutic space, in a strict sense, would equal the abolition of the theater.47

The repetition of the music decouples opera from its traditional narrative expectations and realist interpretations, creating signifiers that point internally rather than to any

46 Klich, 39.
external meaning. *Satyagraha* (1979), Glass’ opera focusing on the early life of Mahatma Gandhi in Africa where he developed his practices of resistance, is driven by similar minimalistic structures that disturb references to western harmonic and narrative expectations.

Out of the experiments of non-narrative theater emerged a twenty-first century theatrical form that viewed classic texts as source material rather than canonic fixed scripts. The Wooster Group, lead by Liz LeCompte, uses television and film in its works to bridge the divide between narrative and non-narrative forms. The ensemble’s production of *Hamlet* uses a 1964 live recorded and edited performance of Richard Burton playing the title character as a tool to recreate a new work. The company asked the question: what story would be told if all we have to use to reconstruct the work was the edited production? The broadcast of the play appears on screens surrounding the actors and audience. What appears on the screen is enacted faithfully, but actors outside the edited realm of the broadcast must create new blocking, dialogue, and narrative. The media broadcast thereby becomes the artifact, the classic text, and the company fills in the gaps with active imaginations to create an altogether new composition. The viewer must process two interconnected performances simultaneously.

**Gideon Obarzanek’s Liberation of the Dancer**

Modern dance underwent a similar progression from the loss of narrative to its subsequent reclamation through the use of multiple media. Australian choreographer Gideon Obarzanek (b. 1966) with the ensemble *Chunky Move* and choreographer, composer, and filmmaker Meredith Monk, push the boundaries of current
multidisciplinary performance. Obarzanek and *Chunky Move* freed dancers from the explicit need for exact repetitions of specific choreography when working alongside projections. Whether it be live musicians working with pre-recorded sounds or dancers and actors with projections, the two media are usually fixed, prepared, requiring one medium to lead and for the second to wait for a trigger.\(^48\) Alternatively, Obarzanek’s *Glow* places the solo dancer in a deep cavity with the audience watching from above (Figure 1-1). No lights adorn the ceiling, instead, a powerful projector tracks and illuminates the dancer. Only the performer’s body in motion is lighted and the remaining stage is left in darkness. The projector also creates new images based on the motion of the performer’s body. Obarzanek writes:

> In *Glow*, light and moving graphics are not pre-rendered video playback but rather images constantly generated by various algorithms responding to movement. In most conventional works employing projections lighting, the dancer’s position and timing have to be completely fixed to the space and timeline of the video playback. Their role is reduced to the difficult chore of making every performance an exact facsimile of the original. In *Glow*, the machine sees the performer and responds to their actions, unlocking them from a relationship of restriction and tedium."\(^49\)

Obarzanek’s liberation of the dancer from explicit choreography and his encouragement of improvisation creates a work that is neither dance nor projection. The projections are dependent on the dancer, yet the dancer reacts to the projections; a positive feedback loop develops and new movement instigates new visuals from the projector. Each performance is unique, fluid, and dynamic in a way only multimedia art can foster.

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\(^{48}\) Respighi’s *Pines of Rome* and Cunningham’s *Biped* are examples of multidisciplinary productions where music or dance are the primary art form and the electronic elements are secondary and cannot survive as independent art.

Through *Glow*, *Mortal Engine*, and *Connected*, Obarzanek exposes the limitations of traditional fixed media and illustrates that their fusion may liberate the artist from this stricture and allow them to create freely.

Figure 1-1: Dancer with projected light from Obarzanek’s *Glow*.

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**Meredith Monk’s Inclusive and Expansive Multidisciplinary Art**

While Obarzanek collaborates with digital, musical, and choreographic artists to create an art form liberated from fixed choreography and rote repetition, Meredith Monk (b. 1942) develops music, movement, visuals, and narrative herself with similar effect. Monk composes the music and dance with forms in mind, yet her rehearsal style and structures are pliable. Where Obarzanek creates a feedback loop between artist and machine, Monk establishes a connection between musicians and dancers where improvisations in vocal melodies influence the choreography and vice versa. The two traditionally separate genres merge to become a musical-physical hybrid art form where

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50 Dancers are attached to a kinetic sculpture that moves in tandem with the dancer, but not representationally.
sound and movement are experientially a coherent system. Monk’s extended vocal techniques emanate from a psychological space that connects the voice with the body, “The voice can move like the body… I realized the voice could be like an instrument, with no text; that within the voice were myriad possibilities of sound, of gender, of landscape, of character.”  

Monk’s later works are created wholly as musical-physical art forms, yet her compositional growth began by meshing these independent forms where vocal improvisations stimulated choreographic ideas.

I rarely come in with the whole structure finished, I felt that it’s a sculptural medium, I’m actually weaving these elements together and I can’t get the sense of what the whole will be until I feel it, until I hear it…I can do that for myself with a solo, but when I work with other people I like to feel that their presence has space in the creation of the work. I’m not just dealing with objects, I’m dealing with human beings and they will have an influence as to what the form will be.

Her ensemble consists of musicians who move and dancers who sing. The distinction is significant as it illustrates how the two media, sound and movement, arrive at the rehearsal separate, are allowed to interact and influence each other, and are then sculpted or culled into a trajectory. The finished product is neither fixed nor an improvisation, rather it evolves while maintaining a recognizable structure. The repetitions, proportions, and physical gestures are a negotiation between ensemble members nightly.

Meredith Monk was introduced to music as a child through Dalcroze Eurhythmics and cites this as a major influence in her creative development. After studying performing arts, and vocal music, at Sarah Lawrence College, she moved to New York City and performed solo works out of her loft studio. Part of the experimental

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53 Meredith Monk, *Meredith Monk a documentary*, directed by Sidsel Mundal (1994; Oslo, Norway; The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation; 1994), VHS.
54 Adolph Appia not only was influenced by Dalcroze Eurhythmics, but also had contact with the founder Emile Jacques-Dalcroze.
soup of New York City that included artists such as John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Bill T. Jones, and Philip Glass, Monk explored the realm of the happening with Break (1964) where she “left the stage to view from the audience the vacuum thus created.”

Similarly, in Blueprint audiences were relocated outside the performance space and invited to watch through windows. Perception and the alteration of a performer or audience’s perspective are vital to Monk’s theatrical works. The audience cannot remain a passive observer.

Monk’s decision to reject most text in her vocal works in favor of invented syllables is integral to encountering her performances. Referring to Three Heavens and Hells she writes, “It was the first time I used words, used children’s poems as a source…the poems were confining because the poems set up specific rhythms…Something was lost when words came into film, I am interested in the musicality of images.” For Monk, language prevents direct communication between performer and listener; language converts an audience into witnesses of emotions rather than experiential participants. Her invented languages, guttural, whispered, and shouted vocalizations transmit emotions from performer to audience with little encoding. Dolmen Music places the performers in a ring facing inward with the audience on the outside. A cello intones a repeating melodic fragment while vocalists each sing unique syllabic combinations. Monk suggests that the audience overhears a language or conversation that while coherent, remains unintelligible to the observer. The audience is invited to move beyond the obstacle of not understanding the language and experience

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56 Monk, Meredith Monk a documentary, Sidsel Mundal.
57 Monk, Meredith Monk: Inner Voice, directed by Babeth M. VanLoo, 5:12.
58 Ibid.
the pathos of the music and movement.

While Steve Reich explored minimalism in conjunction with phasing methods \((Violin Phase (1967), Piano Phase (1967), Clapping Music (1972))\) and John Adams experimented with irregular phrase lengths in \(Shaker Loops (1978)\), Meredith Monk advocated a minimalism founded on additive structures. Rather than structuring a movement upon a single motive, her compositions use a series of repeating melodic fragments that are all contrapuntally related,\(^{59}\) though not always metrically or modally aligned or hierarchically ordered to create propulsion and narrative arc. “Panda Chant II” from \(The Games\), a science-fiction opera by Monk and Ping Chong, illustrates the concept of additive structures. While all individuals intone the opening “Pan-da” mantra on the notes G-A in duple meter, eventually a physical stepping motion in compound time enters. The tenors repeat a motive in 6/8 meter while the altos enter in 7/8 meter and the basses enter in 5/4 meter. The composition grows in intensity through layering fragments until the total is greater than any single melodic or harmonic unit. Monk revisits this additive structure technique throughout her career; it saturates \(Book of Days\).

Meredith Monk’s multimedia works are influenced by her work with film. Sally Banes writes, “Meredith Monk’s theatre is a place of transmutation and transfiguration. Events occur, but their meanings shift and are wiped away; time and space become shattered and rearranged; objects shrink or become luminous and powerful.”\(^{60}\) To alter the perception of time and space in \(Book of Days\) Monk intercuts images of late 20\(^{th}\) century New York City with the primary narrative of a Middle Ages eastern European village. The film commences with construction workers in New York City demolishing a

\(^{59}\) Monk’s melodic fragments are often harmonically related to the framing motive, the repeating motive that serves as a ground for the entire work. See \(Panda Chant II, Fields/Clouds, Plague, and Last Song\).

\(^{60}\) Banes, “The Art of Meredith Monk,” 8.
brick wall using plastic explosives. Upon detonation the hole in the wall becomes a portal to an unknown city of the Middle Ages. From this singularity images from the present and the Middle Ages compete for attention. Banes writes:

Astonishing metamorphoses take place not in the surface of an object (or movement) itself, but as its function or spatial context or timing changes—in much the same way that Lautréamont's *Education of the Girl Child* fortuitous meeting of a sewing machine and an umbrella releases new meanings.”

This juxtaposition of images and sounds, physical gestures with film, constructs new affective content and meaning and draws from the foundation of montage film technique as pioneered by Russian film theorists and directors Lev Kuleshov and Sergi Eisenstein, who grounded their works in perception psychology. In 1983 Monk penned a mission statement; it is a manifesto to perception oriented multidisciplinary art:

My goals:

To create an art that breaks down boundaries between the disciplines, an art which in turn becomes a metaphor for opening up thought, perception, experience.

An art that is inclusive, rather than exclusive, that is expansive, whole, human, multidimensional.

An art that cleanses the senses, that offers insight, feeling, magic. That allows the public to perhaps see familiar things in a new fresh way—that gives them the possibility of feeling more alive.

An art that seeks to reestablish the unity existing in music, theater, and dance—the wholeness that is found in cultures where performing arts practice is considered a spiritual discipline with healing and transformative power.

An art that reaches toward emotion we have no words for, that we barely remember—an art that affirms the world of feeling in a time and society where feelings are in danger of being eliminated.62

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61 Ibid., 14.
CHAPTER 2
MULTIDISCIPLINARY PERFORMANCE AND THE CONCEPTUAL BLENDING MODEL

Multidisciplinary performance, specifically multimedia performance, relies on an audience’s willingness to engage in the co-construction of artistic content with performers and the composer-choreographer-author. While a multidisciplinary performance occurs when any media are juxtaposed in any physical space, multimedia works occur in the psychological space of the audience and performers’ minds. On paper, the juxtaposed media remain separated, yet in the mind, multimedia performances craft a new art form where the composite media are inextricably connected. To decouple one media from the performance would disrupt the psychological space and destroy the emergent art form. Audiences can actively counter the psychological co-construction process by choosing to focus only on the component media instead of searching for a larger emergent framework. The following discussion of montage technique and its relation to the cognitive model of conceptual blending as applied to the fusion of media assumes a receptive and engaged audience.

On Montage

In 1964 Alfred Hitchcock constructed a thought experiment to illustrate how film editing manipulates audience perceptions:

Now I have a close up [of a man’s face]. Let me show what he sees. Let’s assume he saw a woman holding a baby in her arms. Now we cut back to his reaction to what he sees, and he smiles. Now what is he as a character? He is a kindly man. He is sympathetic. Now let’s take the middle piece of film away, the woman with the child, but leave his two pieces of film as they were. Now we’ll put in a piece of film of a girl in a bikini. He looks—girl in a bikini—he smiles. What is he now? A dirty old man. He’s no longer the benign gentleman who loves babies. That’s
Hitchcock exposes how the mind constructs meaning, without the use of language, when comparing two or more images. The second clip of the baby or woman in a bikini impacts the third clip and it is the mind’s comparison of the juxtaposed images that produces new meaning. Neither clip in isolation indicates the man to be “kindly” or “dirty.” Hitchcock termed the use of only visual means to construct a narrative “pure film” technique. As we will see, it is heavily indebted to the experiments of Lev Kuleshov and what is recognized as an early and formalized theory of multidisciplinary analysis.

Lev Kuleshov, co-founder of the Moscow Film School, established a workshop in 1917 to explore radical experiments in film editing. In his essay “The Principles of Montage,” Kuleshov observed that Russian films used little splicing of camera angles and perspectives; they preferred long shots with actors before a static camera. Comparing the number of spliced shots used per silent film, he calculated that Russian films used between ten to fifteen shots, the Europeans used up to thirty shots, and American films used upwards of one hundred separate shots. He surmised:

The American films achieved the greatest audience reaction because they contained the greatest number of shots, from the greatest number of separate scenes, and accordingly, that montage, as the source of expression, as the artistic organization of material, affected the viewer more strongly and vividly in American films.64

Kuleshov believed American film editors needed to “compensate for the inadequacies” of actors and directors through the use of montage.”65 Curious to whether

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65 Ibid., 194.
additional merit existed in the technique, he devised an experiment remembered as the “Kuleshov Effect.” Kuleshov filmed a five second clip of a suited man with a blank or emotionless expression. Film clips of hot soup, a young girl in a casket, and an attractive woman were spliced in between repetitions of the expressionless man. Audiences were asked to describe the character of the man in each clip; invariably the man after the hot soup was hungry, the man after the girl in the casket was mournful, and the man after the attractive woman was aroused. Kuleshov isolated the power of montage, discovering that images with no intentional relationship, when juxtaposed, can create new content and synchronicity.

A Neurological Approach to Multidisciplinary Performance

Artists need not wade into the cavernous depths of musical meaning, metaphor, or the hermeneutics of the construction of meaning to analyze multidisciplinary performance. All that is necessary is to acknowledge that a difference in meaning and experiential affect exists between Hitchcock’s Psycho with and without its iconic soundtrack. More specifically, a performance of Meredith Monk’s Book of Days incurs a different meaning and experiential affect when presented in concert than when viewed in conjunction with its film.

Why the brain creates meaning when presented with two or more unrelated images or media is rooted in biology. Joseph Anderson, film theorist and advocate for a neurological interpretation of media, argues, “Perception is an information-gathering activity. And when it occurs in two or more sensory modes simultaneously, it is a
process of information comparison, an active search for cross-modal confirmation.”

The brain is primed to search for connections between juxtaposed images, ideas, or art forms. Moreover, the brain searches for analogous elements, modal redundancies, between two or more media such as color, line, intensity, and narrative to find ways to relate two independent ideas.

The brain searches for cause and effect relationships between sound and image, the physical and aural. Anderson postulates that in the presence of multiple media a feedback loop exists that may confirm an idea or reject it. A rejection results in the reevaluation of the narrative or idea. Anderson suggests:

> If patterns and rhythms are confirmed across modalities, the information carried by sound and image is perceived as being generated by a single event…the absence of the opportunity to confirm our perceptions cross-modally might account for our discomfort in viewing a silent film without accompaniment. If we are programmed by evolution to check and cross check our perceptions multi-modally, the inability to do so might well make us fundamentally, vaguely uneasy.

The initial driving sequence in Alfred Hitchcock’s psychological thriller *Psycho* (1960) tests Anderson’s assertion. After defrauding her employer of $40,000, Marion drives along bucolic State Road-1 to meet her lover in northern California. A striking musical theme develops, composed by Bernard Herrmann, comprised of restless rhythmic strings that arpeggiate dueling diminished-seventh chords, a forecast of the now famous “stabbing” motive. As Marion drives, the music does not align with her physical motions, the steering wheel, the rhythm of the rain, the windshield wipers, the editing of the shots, or the speed of her vehicle. Because the two media do not show a specific cause and effect relationship, according to Anderson, the mind reevaluates the relationship between music and image. This reassessment generates a new interpretation.

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67 Anderson, 86-87.
of the music, one that heightens Marion’s disturbed and frantic mental state rather than
furthering a narrative of a confident escape and rendezvous with her lover.\textsuperscript{68} Anderson
argues, “If musical and visual information are in conflict in any one of these instances, the
conflict will force the viewer to go back and reevaluate earlier reactions, to reinterpret the patterns and significance of the filmic events.”\textsuperscript{69}

Causality arises from ordered images reaching a primed brain. Neuroscientists
Eugene d’Aquili and Andrew Newberg hypothesize the existence of cognitive operators,
systems of neurons genetically programmed to carry out specific non-conscious
processes. The researchers write:

These operators are specific functions that specific parts of the brain perform as part of the mind. Cognitive operators are essentially analogous to the operators used in mathematics. In mathematics, operators can be looked upon as the means by which mathematical elements are related to one another. For example, plus (+), minus (−), multiplication (×), and division (÷) signs are all operators. Respectively, they tell us to add, subtract, multiply, and divide numbers...The mind has cognitive operators that work in a similar manner to the mathematical operators. However, the cognitive operators have sensory perception, thoughts, and emotions as input in contrast to the mathematical operators...Cognitive operators function in a similar manner in the minds of all people.\textsuperscript{70}

D’Aquili and Newberg identify seven cognitive operators: 1.) the holistic
operator (allows for the perception of reality as gestalt), 2.) the reductionist operator
(opposition to the holistic operator, reduces one event into a chain of smaller events), 3.)
the abstractive operator (the formation of general concepts from a series of individual
facts), 4.) the binary operator (orders elements into oppositional dyads), 5.) the causal
operator (allows for the logical perception of relationships between facts), 6.) the
quantitative operator (permits the abstraction of quantity), and 7.) the emotional value

\textsuperscript{69} Anderson, 86-87. View the excerpt of Hitchcock’s \textit{Psycho} at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-PnGRaJaSA
\textsuperscript{70} Eugene d’Aquili and Andrew Newberg, \textit{The Mystical Mind} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 50.
operator (assigns an emotional value to the responses of other operators). More than any other operator, the abstractive operator appeals to our biological understanding of montage theory and multidisciplinary performance. D’Aquili and Newberg write:

The abstractive operator allows us to put two facts together and create the abstract concept that these two concepts might be linked... The reason that the abstractive operator can perform these functions is that it received input from the association areas of various sensory modalities. Thus, the abstractive operator is derived from an association area of association areas and it can therefore generate classes of objects that are vastly more inclusive than any classification system that is possible within a given sensory modality.

A neurological approach to the interpretation of the effects of montage now exists that is driven by behaviors genetically prescribed for their evolutionarily relevance to survival. Functioning in tandem with the abstractive operator is the causal operator that compels humans “to believe that a cause exists for every phenomena, and so we make one up if cause and effect are not apparent.” Because operators act through the subconscious mind, not only is cause and effect created in the absence of one, but also, humans believe this fictitious creation without question. D’Aquili and Newberg argue that religious experiences are actual sensations initiated by the brain while creating cause and effect relationships when one does not exist suggesting, “Human beings have no choice but to construct myths to explain their world... the cognitive operators necessarily perform their functions even if they must generate gods, demons, or other ‘power sources’ to do so: we must develop myths in order to find at least temporary solutions.” The human condition is such that one believes the responses of our unconscious operators when we encounter montages of facts, ideas, or media. Operators offer a neurological explanation for the unconscious fusing of two or more isolated

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71 Ibid.  
72 Ibid., 54.  
73 Ibid.  
74 Ibid., 86.
images into a narrative, the construction of meaning and affect from unrelated source material, and the psychological process at work behind montage theory.

A Cognitive Psychology Approach to Multidisciplinary Performance: Leading to the Technique of Conceptual Blending

Music theorist Lawrence Zbikowski intimates that the work of cognitive scientist Gilles Fauconnier and linguist and philosopher Mark Turner and their research on conceptual blending holds the key to multimedia analysis.75 The model of conceptual blending describes how subconscious processes meld divergent information to forge innovation. Fauconnier and Turner argue that while much of our cognitive processes are occupied interpreting such basic stimuli as temperature, color, taste, pressure, and movement, our conscious thoughts are governed by information comparison.

I illustrate Fauconnier and Turner’s conceptual blending concept with the case of long jumpers Bob Beamon and Mike Powell. At the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, track and field star Bob Beamon from South Jamaica, Queens, entered the long jump competition. His career record at that time was 8.33 meters. After two initial attempts were disqualified, he adjusted his approach and landed a world record of 8.90 meters. Amazingly, Beamon’s record held for 22 years and 316 days until it was broken in 1991 by Mike Powell. It is natural to believe Powell to be the better athlete, yet we know that the two athletes never competed against each other as Powell was only five years old during the 1968 Olympics. Conceptual blending recognizes two athletes and two independent long jump competitions 23 years apart and conflates these separate events into a single competition where both contended each other. This fictional blended

narrative is congruent with d’Aquili and Newberg’s notion that a cause and effect scenario is created in the absence of any real connection. Fauconnier and Turner write:

There is nothing more basic in human life than cause and effect...This kind of analysis gives us the feeling that we understand the complex event, having consciously reduced it to a set of basic events that are taken as self-evident.  

They continue discussing narrative construction:

Somehow we have to invent a scenario that draws from the two analogues but ends up containing more. We have to be able to run that scenario as an integrated unit, even though it corresponds to no possible set of “matches” to prior reality or experience. Somehow, the dynamics of this imaginary scenario are automatic, even though it has never been run before. The blend ends up making possible a set of “matches” that seem obvious to us...Finding the matches...is relatively minor when compared with the creation of new meaning in the blend.

The competition of Beamon and Powell with Powell as the victor arises instantaneously, without conscious effort suggesting the presence of d’Aquili and Newberg’s operators. The fictional narrative only exists in the psychological space of the interpreter; this space and its amalgamation process are the realm of conceptual blending, a theory of human cognition.

Conceptual blending is comprised of mental spaces, psychological regions, continuously created when we think, communicate, and act. These spaces facilitate the fast comprehension of new information. The standard conceptual blending model contains two input spaces corresponding to the two independent ideas at play, a generic space where the shared attributes of the inputs coexist, cross-space mapping where attributes of each input are linked or left unlinked, and a blended space where attributes of both inputs comingle to create an emergent structure not found in either input space.

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77 Ibid., 20.
78 Ibid., 310.
Not all attributes from each of the input spaces are carried into the blended space, thus, the projected blend is difficult to predict. The blend is generated through “the composition of projections from the inputs, through completion based on independently recruited frames and scenarios, and through elaborations.” The blended space is a locus of innovative ideas, yet a precise product is tantamount to predicting the lottery. Several models of conceptual blending can be considered in the analysis of multimedia works. These are described below.

Figure 2-1: Diagram of Fauconnier and Turner’s generic conceptual blending model

Conceptual Blending Model 1: The Mirror Network

The mirror network model is the most common form of conceptual blending where the framing structures of two input spaces are identical. The projected blend

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79 Ibid., 40-42.
80 Ibid., 47.
81 Ibid., 46.
contains the precise structure found in each input. The example of the two world-record long jumpers is an instance of a mirror network; both input spaces are dominated by a specific athletic competition. Despite occurring 23 years apart in independent locations, the common structure allows the projection of a single competition into the blended space.\textsuperscript{82}

**Conceptual Blending Model 2: The Single-Scope Network**

While the mirror network is the most common conceptual blending model, it does not give rise to an emergent idea. When the structures of the input spaces are different, the potential for perceptual innovation arises. A single-scope network arises from inputs with differing structures, whereby these structures are projected unequally into the blended spaces causing one structure to dominate or suppress the other. Examine the concept of Christian baptism: water and prayer occupy the input spaces. When blended, the product is water with sacramental properties as a vehicle for the divine. “Baptizing a baby by immersion is meant to make it eligible for spiritual salvation, not to protect it against drowning or to make it good at having deep thoughts.”\textsuperscript{83} The dominant structure in this case is the Christian prayer, as baptism is a religious ritual. This imbalance of concepts results in one input governing the structure of the combined idea: water confers cleansing from sin and therefore redemption, rather than divine prayer conferring protection from water. Blended spaces that result from unequal projection of structures act to suppress innovation. The attributes of the subordinate

\textsuperscript{82} A mirror network does not exist if a comparison is made between an athlete and a current record. The mirror network arises because input spaces contain identical frames, that of an athlete in competition with another athlete. A record or standard detaches the result from its competition. The mirror network necessitates the comparison of two identical structures.

\textsuperscript{83} Fauconnier and Turner, 86.
input modestly influence the attributes of the primary input.

**Conceptual Blending Model 3: The Double-Scope Network**

The double-scope network is a system with equal projection of divergent structural attributes into the blended space. To understand how it operates, examine the concept of the computer desktop. Fauconnier and Turner suggest that the computer interface is an entirely novel notion structured with equal elements from each input space: the traditional office environment with desk, trashcan, files, doors, windows, versus the digital environment where clicking, dragging, and specific typed commands running programs and algorithms enacts tasks (recall that prior to the traditional desktop, computers functioned by command prompts only).84 The blended concept links a physical location with a virtual location. Users do not operate their computer as if they are in an office setting, though they draw on this knowledge to assist in the operation of the computer. Similarly, they do not realize their actions are ersatz command prompts. A user may begin by drawing upon knowledge of an office environment, but new ideas emerge, such as an endless series of folders to manage files. The emergent structure allows users to efficiently connect the hardware of the machine and virtual environment with the tasks of office work. Fauconnier and Turner write, “…in double-scope networks we see the new and fascinating phenomenon of innovation, which is unique to the cognitively modern human being.”85 In multimedia performance, innovation takes the form of an emergent content or artistic structure or even the emergence of a new artistic medium.

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84 Ibid., 23-24.
85 Ibid., 299.
Extrapolating the double-scope network to a macro scale and including multidisciplinary art, we turn to the 1979 birth of Ars Electronica, an Austrian center created in collaboration with the International Bruckner Festival and the Linzer Klangwolke (Linz Cloud of Sound), a festival of modern music with visual projections. In 1995 the organization held its annual festival and devoted it to technological interconnectivity, titling it: *Welcome to the Wired World*. French philosopher and media scholar Pierre Lévy notes that the festival celebrates the human race’s fusion with technology to become a new evolutionary species. In program notes to the festival catalog Lévy mused:

> Human beings, people from here and everywhere, you who are caught in this great movement of deterritorialization, you who are grafted onto the pulsing new hyperbody of humanity, you who think dispersed among the hypercortex of nations, you who are caught in this immense event of the world that never stops returning to itself and recreating itself again, you who are launched toward the virtual, you who are taken in this enormous jump that our species accomplishes nowadays upstream in the flow of being, yes, in the very heart of this strange whirlwind, you are at home. Welcome to the human race's new house. Welcome to virtualization. 86

The mirror network, single-scope network, and the double-scope network together delineate the continuum of multidisciplinary performances (*Figure 2-2*).

*Figure 2-2: Continuum of multidisciplinary performances compared with conceptual blending models*

Conceptual blending applies to small and global scale ideas alike; it fashions new

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perspectives of us in relation to our environment, government, religion, and family. The expressive potential of conceptual bending allows for a coordinated approach to the explication of multidisciplinary performances that involves the parsing of structural elements into their component media, the cross-input mapping of redundant modal attributes, the projection of those attributes into a blended idea, and the potential discovery of emergent ideas and structures that result from the blend.

**Conceptual Blending in Musical Collaborations**

Many musicians consider conventional opera and musical theater to be forms of multimedia art. These genres make extensive use of theatrical staging, dynamic lighting, costumes, sets, and often pyrotechnics in addition to vocal and instrumental music. Yet, the audience for opera and musical theater does not expect to notice different stories or ideas being told by each of the involved media. Rather, a single unified trajectory is anticipated. Not only are the additional media subordinate to the theatrical and musical domains, they all exhibit analogous narrative structures (the progression of costumes, sets, and lights serve the narrative arc and not an independent story). Using the language of Fauconnier and Turner, the media of conventional opera and musical theater consist of the same structure; when combined, a new innovation does not result. Mirror networks are not pathways to multimedia performance, they are examples of modal redundancy. Recall that it is the development of an emergent structure from two or more input media that characterizes true multimedia performance through a double-scope network.87

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87 Conceptual opera directors, directors who alter the location or update the language or concept of a work, continue to create mirror networks because the new work remains an opera with set, costumes, lighting.
In the choral realm, performances that combine vocal and choral music with static images are almost commonplace and often cited as an organization’s foray into multimedia performance. In 2011, the Philadelphia Singers performed Handel’s oratorio *Israel in Egypt* in conjunction with projected images of relics from Christian-Egyptian holy sites and artistic renderings of the biblical narrative. The projections served to reinforce the narrative of the oratorio; the dominant framing structure was the Bible’s depiction of Exodus despite each media containing a unique expressive language. The two input spaces contain much cross-space mapping where musical depictions of the narrative readily align with visual representations. The mirror network arises from identical structures between the inputs that prevent an emergent structure from forming.

Linguistic theories of metaphor are partially encompassed by the conceptual blending model. Music and perception theorist Lawrence Zbikowski postulates that metaphor offers insight to how content or perceived significance is transferred from one medium to another. Metaphors transfer information from a sign to its content, Fauconnier and Turner’s single-scope network, where one input is inserted into the realm of the other. In the phrase “Love is War,” the attributes of war, the source domain, are grafted onto the target domain of love. Love takes on characteristics of war; we do not view war as romantic. This metaphor will not function when the target domain is suppressed entirely by the source material. The arrow of influence flows in only one direction.

music, and drama all following a unified structure regardless of the fact that it has a new shell. All media continue to point to the same goal. This does not rule out the possibility of opera or musical theater that support media of contrasting structures (a double-scope network opera); see discussion of the Wooster Group’s recontextualization of *Hamlet* on page 19.


89 Zbikowski, 255.

90 Ibid.
Conceptual blending is offered as a more thorough and comprehensive alternative to metaphor theory. While a metaphor’s target domain stands for or signifies its source domain, the theory of conceptual blending suggests that the source and target domains may have diverse relationships, and can potentially equally influence each other, as in the double-scope network. The result can be the formation of an emergent structure with novel content. The arrow of influence can flow in both directions, between sign and content, to create a new idea.

In 2009, Britlin Losee recorded all the parts of Eric Whitacre’s *Sleep* and uploaded the mixed video to youtube.com. Inspired by Losee’s video, Whitacre solicited singers from around the world to record videos of the individual parts of *Lux Aurumque* and upload them to youtube.com. A team of audio and video engineers then blended the files into a single video showing all the performers at once with a video of Whitacre conducting. Using the conceptual blending model, we assign the music to one input space and the idiom of the internet to the second space. Despite the different media with independent structures, one is an aural choral experience while the other is a virtual and digital experience, in the blended space, the structure of the “choir” dominates the digital structure creating a single-scope network. The final product is a choir that takes place out of time and space in a digital and timeless environment (rather than a virtual world with choral qualities). One of the many virtues of the Virtual Choir Project is that it connects people from all across the world in a single chorus. This claim by Whitacre is grafted from the virtual realm upon the musical experience; music is the target domain and provides the basic structure for the blended concept. The final video positions the

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91 The TED presentation by Eric Whitacre and an excerpt of the Virtual Choir can be viewed at: [http://www.ted.com/talks/eric_whitacre_a_virtual_choir_2_000_voices_strong.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/eric_whitacre_a_virtual_choir_2_000_voices_strong.html).
singer’s individual videos in a choral formation surrounding the conductor’s video on three sides. The difference between the live choral experience and the virtual experience is its digital location and the ability to connect singers worldwide. At its core, the project remains a choral ensemble.

Should an idea arise from the wedding of music and virtual experiences that is neither music nor computer related, this new concept would be an emergent idea in the realm of the double-scope model. Some critics suggest that the virtual choir is a projection of the greater global community. Because this concept is neither music nor virtual, it must arise from a double-scope network. The perception of art by its audiences cannot be fully predicted or controlled, thus, there is room for interpretation of Whitacre’s Virtual Choir as both a single-scope and a double-scope network.

The relationship between Hollywood film and music is often a single-scope network. Hollywood’s conventional approach to scoring film is predicated upon the notion that when a composer receives the film it is a completed work and the function of the music is to intensify perspectives already present in the moving image. French film director and critic Claude Chabrol suggests:

> The problem of scoring films is terrible. Although music is a very important part of film, usually, composers only get the film when it’s finished. They’re given very little time to write music [and] that music must fit very precise timings. Personally, I’m always amazed when they pull it off.92

If we imagine *Jaws* without its potent semitone motive, perhaps substitute a legato romantic theme, one discovers that most movie music is subordinate to the filmic image. Music and media theorist Nicholas Cook acknowledges this writing, “The classical Hollywood film, for instance, was virtually complete before it was passed on to the

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composer for scoring; the composer’s job was understood as one of complementing what was already there in the words and pictures.”

The music of Bernard Herrmann stands as an exception, a classical composer with symphonic and operatic works to his name prior to devoting himself to film scoring. His work is an example of a double-scope network that fuses music and film. Herrmann was dedicated to crafting music that could also stand on its own. The mythology that surrounds the collaboration of Bernard Herrmann and Alfred Hitchcock purports that after the paramount success of Psycho, the relationship soured and abruptly ended in the middle of scoring Torn Curtain (1966). Herrmann exited Torn Curtain after Hitchcock insisted on the climatic murder scene be revealed without music; the collaboration erupted in conflict during the middle of a recording session for the murder scene. Herrmann resigned from the Motion Picture Association soon thereafter citing a lack of respect given to film composers.

In Torn Curtain, an American physicist, Michael Anderson, defects to East Germany during the Cold War with his fiancée, Sarah Sr. Once there, it becomes apparent to the audience that Anderson is an American operative seeking intelligence on Soviet Union missile programs. While at his contact’s farmhouse, he is confronted by an East German security officer. Sarah is forced to stab the officer with a long carving knife to save them both.

The final silent version and Herrmann’s orchestration of the stabbing scene appear in sequence on a documentary of Herrmann’s compositional career and suggest that the composer’s score ignited a scene that otherwise struggled to project tension and

93 Cook, 105.
intimidation. The double-scope network created by the stabbing sequence with Herrmann’s score is similar to Marion’s initial driving scene in *Psycho* where music signified the ingénue’s mental state. To audiences the emergent psychological state of Sarah is one of paranoia, derangement, hesitation, and resignation to her lover’s deception and violent hidden life. The scene without music projects the technical aspects of film making such as scripted blocking, timing, and manipulative editing. Herrmann’s score achieves more than hiding the film director’s trade. It stimulates a new idea within Sarah’s character and propels the scene toward a climax, the stabbing, beating with a shovel, and the suffocation in a gas oven of the East German officer. The stabbing scene of *Torn Curtain* is similar to the shower scene from *Psycho*; the film and music establish associative feedback loops with each other in audiences’ consciousness. One cannot hear the strident chords from *Psycho* and not recall the images of Marion screaming and bleeding in the shower. Likewise, one cannot watch the scene silently and not hear the chords internally. Such is the case in *Torn Curtain*. Few directors were up to the challenge of creating movies with a Bernard Herrmann score. The composer’s later career was marked by critics intimating that even a quality film might collapse under the stress of a Herrmann score, yet it is only such a powerful medium that can fight to project itself equally into the blended space in order to create Sarah’s mental state.

While Fauconnier and Turner’s notion of conceptual blending is a model of cognition based in linguistics, French Philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari offer an experientially based model of emergent structures. They point to the relationship of the orchid and the wasp. The product of millions of years of coevolution, each species

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95 Ibid.
of orchid carved a unique ecological niche by attracting a specific species of wasp. The flower’s shape allows only a wasp with the appropriate proboscis to penetrate the plant’s reproductive cavity and reach the enticing nectar. In the process of feeding, the orchid deposits or receives pollen for fertilization. While the orchid and wasp maintain separate identities as plant and insect, together, a new commensal relationship develops. Within this virtual and material identity the flower and wasp require each other for existence; they assume a single facade. Deleuze and Guattari write:

The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid’s reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome.

The rhizome is the space where all possible assemblages or attributes exist and all objects and ideas are connected: “Always look for the molecular, or even sub molecular particle with which we are all allied.”

The choreographed dance of the wasp and orchid is analogous to Obarzanek’s Glow where human and machine entities retain separate identities, yet audiences nonetheless experience a third virtual identity of human-becoming-machine-becoming-human. The virtual experience of the perceiver will become important in the discussion of multisensory performance in Chapter Three.

Prior to analyzing Meredith Monk’s Book of Days using the model of conceptual blending, acknowledgement should be given to music theorist Nicholas Cook. Before Fauconnier and Turner’s writings on cognitive integration networks were published,

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97 Deleuze and Guattari appropriate the term deterritorialization to suggest the removal of political, social, and cultural practices or control from their native land and populations; a loosening of ties between space-time locations. Deterritorialization is often accompanied by reterritorialization, the recontextualization of an object or idea. While the structure of the idea or object remains, the new context creates an emergent idea or new content for the object. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, translated and edited by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press; 2007), 508/
98 Ibid., 11.
99 Ibid., 12.
Cook developed a theory of analyzing multidisciplinary works that is strikingly similar, though rooted in metaphor theory. Cook devised a series of tests to determine whether a composition was truly multimedia by examining whether the media held similar or divergent structural trajectories. Cook argued that performances with media that shared similar (conformant) framing structures were not strong instances of multimedia. Similarity in this context suggests modal redundancy between media. Compositions with media operating under contrasting (contrary or contradictory) structures, if the difference is great, were deemed to be in conflict. If the media were modestly different, then it was labeled complementary. Cook writes, “I have described the contest as the paradigmatic model of multimedia...A basic fact about most multimedia is that it is the work of more than one author.”\textsuperscript{100} He suggests that conflicting media structures are foundational for strong multimedia performances and often present in collaborative performances with multiple authors. Immediately, analogues of the mirror, single-scope, and double-scope networks present themselves and both groups of scholars seek a pathway to predict emergent properties (Table 2-3).

\textsuperscript{100} Cook, 128.
Cook’s model of similarity and difference was an exemplary foray into the barren field of multidisciplinary analysis from a music-centered perspective, yet his model is awkward and inflexible in the face of new cognitive research. Cook based his assertions of multidisciplinary performance on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s theory of metaphor. Lawrence Zbikowski outlines the two weak points in Cook’s metaphor-based model: while attributes from one media input are mapped onto the

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101 Ibid., 99.
102 Cook defines all works that involve media as Instances of Multimedia (IMM) and defines a spectrum of multimedia works with those with contradictory media relationships occupying the strong end and those with conformant media relationships on the weaker end. This confusing language led me to define the spectrum as multidisciplinary and points along this spectrum as mix media, multimedia, and multisensory, similar to the continuum suggested by Fauconnier and Turner’s mirror, single-scope, and double-scope networks.
second, the arrow of influence flows in one direction.\(^{103}\) Zbikowski concludes that limitations of metaphor theory restrict the flow of attribute mapping and limit any prediction of an emergent property.\(^{104}\) In conceptual metaphor theory, as Leo Treitler suggests, one element stands for or signifies another; a performance of Meredith Monk’s \textit{Last Song} may be described as mournful or signifying mournfulness, but our understanding of the word mournful is hardly altered by Monk’s composition.\(^{105}\) If transference from song to language does exist, it is because the idea is not a metaphor at all, rather, it is an example of conceptual blending. In multimedia performance, this omnidirectional flow of attributes is necessary to allow inputs to exchange and influence traits through mutual implication; it is here that the metaphor model breaks down. The metaphor model addresses the fusion of media within multidisciplinary environments that are not multimedia in nature. The multimedia environment requires the arrow of influence to flow in both directions as found in the conceptual blending model.

The second fault in Cook’s model arises from the theory’s inability to explain the emergence of new structures in the blended space that were components of neither input space.\(^{106}\) The psychological spaces of Marion and Sarah opened by Herrmann’s score for \textit{Psycho} and \textit{Torn Curtain}, respectively, are present in neither the input space of the music or the film; they emerge through the co-mingling of media.

After assimilating Zbikowski’s critique, Cook decouples his idea from Lakoff’s metaphor theory and embraces the work of Fauconnier and Turner.\(^{107}\) Reflecting on his

\(^{103}\) Zbikowski, 258.
\(^{104}\) Ibid.
\(^{106}\) Zbikowski, 258.
multimedia model and attempting to transfer it to the construction of musical meaning in
general, Cook embraces the free flow of attributes. Adopting the language of conceptual
blending when deciphering the message of commercials, Cook writes:

> We have the blended space in which the meaning of the commercial emerges: the qualities of
> agility, precision, style, and prestige associated with Mozart’s music are drawn from it, so to
> speak, and transferred to or predicated on the ZX 16v. In that predication lies the advertiser’s
> message.\(^{108}\)

The advertiser’s message, within the blended space, is Fauconnier and Turner’s
emergent structure.

While the conceptual blending model now stands as an important theory for the
analysis, construction, and performance of multidisciplinary works, few theorists
continued the strain of inquiry. Since Cook’s blessing of the model in 2001 and
Zbikowski’s additional comments in the form of a review of Cook’s original model,
significant advancement in the field stalled. Before applying the conceptual blending
approach to Meredith Monk’s *Book of Days*, Chapter Three will explore how the
juxtaposition of media in multidisciplinary performance may restrict or widen the
interpretative content of a work.

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\(^{108}\) Ibid., 182.
Emergent Structures and Becoming

Fauconnier and Turner’s cognitive model as applied to multidisciplinary performance gives rise to an emergent structure, within a double-scope network, that captures a snapshot of perceived time. The emergent blend is a discursive space that exists outside experienced time. It is a linguistically rooted approach to understanding the relationships between juxtaposed media. Deleuze and Guattari approach the notion of the emergent structure from an experiential and temporal perspective. They offer a process of becoming where an idea is neither fully formed nor completely nascent: wasp-becoming-orchid and orchid-becoming wasp. This process of becoming is integral to understanding emergent structures and their associated content.

The new content of an emergent structure may be either representational or non-representational, in other words, the audience may encounter a restricted or unrestricted number of available interpretive choices. Representational content is geared toward immediacy, fast comprehension with little additional interpretation. Non-representational content ignites Deleuze and Guattari’s process of becoming where the content requires interpretation by an audience to be comprehended.

Multisensory performance is a multimedia performance where the juxtaposed media act to broaden the interpretive potentiality of the performance through the becoming process. Multisensory performances project a non-representational content that audiences may choose to decode in a vast number of ways. The alternative to multisensory performance is multimedia or mixed media performances where media
restrict or direct the interpretive potentiality of the performance. Where representational content exists, audiences have a limited number of interpretive options from which to choose. Put another way, multisensory performances through the process of becoming create an abundance of interpretive potentialities for audiences while non-multisensory performances tend to restrict interpretive potentialities, a projection of fixed relationships (Figure 3-1). Two scenarios suggest the importance of multisensory performances in the multidisciplinary typology.

Figure 3-1: Continuum of multisensory performances compared with the becoming process and a perceived audience interpretive gap.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multisensory</th>
<th>Non-Multisensory/ Mixed Media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Becoming Process</td>
<td>Immediacy of Comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abundance/ Surplus</td>
<td>Lack/ Restriction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Non-Representational</td>
<td>Content Representational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlimited Interpretive Potentialities</td>
<td>Restricted Interpretive Potentialities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience Interpretation Needed</td>
<td>Audience Interpretation Not Necessary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Broadway musical *Big River*, produced by the Deaf West Theater Company, is a play based upon Mark Twain’s 1884 novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.109 The production paired deaf actors signing lyrics and dialogue with singers vocalizing in the background to provide the music. After an initial difficulty determining what to

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109 Excerpts of the 2006 production of *Big River* may be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OnTHClb-6NY
watch, the hands and faces of the signers prevail and the vocalists become part of the sets. The brain appropriates the vocals as emanating from the hands of the signers because of Joseph Anderson’s postulate that synchronous events are perceived as originating from a single media source.

The second scenario involves a performance by the Oregon Bach Festival with conductor Helmut Riling. In 2006, German filmmaker Bastian Clevé completed a twenty-five year effort to create short films timed to each of the movements of J.S. Bach’s B-Minor Mass. The films portray the birth and life of Jesus Christ. Bach’s monumental setting of the mass ordinary, structured into the form of a cantata mass, accompanies the movements of the film.

These examples illustrate poles on a spectrum of multisensory performance, with non-representational content on one end and representational content on the other. In each scenario, an existing work is combined with a newer medium. In *Big River*, the new medium is choreographed sign language and at the Oregon Bach Festival it is a series of silent films on the birth of Christ. The similarities between the two examples end here, for the latter leads to representational content while the former leads to the creation of a multisensory performance. *Big River*’s blending of texted music and physical movement by hands widens the interpretive potentiality of the performance instead of restricting it. The production adds physical movement to a text, primarily understandable by those who read American Sign Language, which transforms language with explicit meanings into a series of hand symbols and gestures. A gap of understanding exists between what the hands are doing and what the singers are telling. This gap must be interpreted by the

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110 The trailer for *Klang der Ewigkeit* may be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heOJeOCr4MA
audience; meaning must be constructed for the musical-hands emergent structure. Individuals who hear the sung texts and also understand American Sign Language fluently, likely, find the production an example of representational and restricted interpretive potential since all media present the same information in different expressive languages. In this instance, not only is the performance not multimedia, it is also a mirror network and a mixed-media performance.

J.S. Bach’s Mass in B-Minor contains the Latin text of the Roman ordinary, yet, since the Second Vatican Council’s abolition of Latin as the prime liturgical language, the public’s comprehension of the translated meaning of the ordinary has diminished. A large portion of the classical music public finds great solace in the music of Bach outside its sacred context. The addition of films with discrete imagery of the birth, life, and death of Christ suggests that the music and the Latin text are primarily about this biblical story. The film projects a discrete meaning and restricts access to most interpretive possibilities from the film-music composite. By removing the mystery from performance, by transforming symbols into an exact meaning, the role of the audience as interpreter is lost. The audience is relegated to a passive role, a receiver position, and the possibility of co-constructing an artistic experience with the performers and creators is removed.

Similar to montage theory, identification of an exact meaning is not necessary to illustrate a restriction of interpretive content, only a transition from mysterious and non-representational content to fixed signs and symbols need be recognized. To explore multisensory performance, we return to Deleuze and Guattari’s description of the symbiotic relationship between wasps and orchids. Suggesting an increase in potentiality within the process of becoming, they write:

At the same time, something else entirely is going on: not imitation at all but a capture of code,
surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp. Each of these becomings brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization even further. There is neither imitation nor resemblance, only an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying.111

Within the double-scope process, the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization112 create the potential for a “surplus value” of interpretive content, that is, an expansion of interpretive potential. An idea or object with a specific identity is definable, knowable, rigid, and static or territorialized. If an idea is "becoming," it travels on a path to someplace unknown, its attributes becoming deterritorialized; it bends towards an identity without reaching it. It is asymptotic. While the becoming process presumably occurs in the mind through cognitive channels, it is a virtual experience for the perceiver and fundamentally different that Fauconnier and Turner’s discursive model of conceptual blending, which exists outside of temporal experience.

Another useful process to recognize, “Circulation of intensities” refers to the exchange of attributes in both directions, the double articulation113 of wasp and orchid. Prior to the orchid and wasp engaging in a becoming “event”, the attributes of the wasp are clear signs that refer directly to the insect and its content, and similarly with the orchid. Characteristics such as buzzing, flying, yellow and black colors, represent the wasp. Once the wasp and orchid are deterritorialized and again reterritorialized, the emergent structure has greater interpretive possibilities than either component media. This is because the flow of attributes now fluidly moves in both directions between media; the arrow of influence is multidirectional. The emergent structure of wasp-

112 See note 81 for a discussion of Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.
113 Deleuze and Guattari’s process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.
becoming orchid and orchid-becoming-wasp is less representational than either component entities. Deleuze and Guattari’s “becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp” concept describes a process that has no initiation or termination. The orchid-wasp apparatus is never completely definable. This process dissolves the relationship of signifiers and content.

Deleuze and Guattari recognize that content and the expression of that content are inseparable. To parse a multisensory work into its component media halts the process of becoming. Once becoming stops, the orchid and wasp regain separate identities and their individual contents are obvious once again. This is the layer missing in Fauconnier and Turner’s conceptual blending model, the notion that blending is a continuous process and that an emergent structure is not simply a cognitive event, but also an experiential process. An interruption of the becoming process in a multisensory performance (apart from the conclusion of a work) is potentially interpreted by an audience as a technical error and breaks the theatrical suspension of disbelief. The performance returns the elements of the blended media to isolated inputs ending any non-representational content created by emergent structure. Recalling Obarzanek’s Glow, the combined form of dancer becoming-machine-becoming-dancer is inseparable into component parts without reducing the work to triviality. Content, form, and expression are integrated elements of the becoming process.

**Adorno’s Truth Content and Multisensory Performance**

To experience a concert, traditional or multidisciplinary, where the need for audience interpretation is restricted, is to witness the death of that performance; its truth
content is exposed. Truth content for theorist Theodor Adorno is a work’s irreducible germ and is accessible only by analysis. Performance can be a form of analysis. When a musical performance is augmented with another medium, there exists a great propensity for that added medium to analyze the music. Adorno writes, “analysis must be immanent…Works need analysis for their truth content to be revealed.”114 He suggests that true art is non-linguistic, “The truly poetic in poetry is that which defies translation.”115 While Adorno approaches music from a societal perspective, which is in contrast to Deleuze and Guattari, truth content might be considered indefinable during the process of becoming art and definable when studied out of context, analyzed, and reduced. This binary position suggests that in multidisciplinary environments where two media interact, one medium could potentially expose the content of the other. Not all multimedia performances, therefore, are processes of becoming. It is vital to reinforce the notion of the multidisciplinary performance continuum where mixed media, multimedia, and multisensory performances define the median and outer extremes.

**Becoming and the Interpretive Gap**

The cross-space mapping of characteristics between any two media cannot be exact. It is impossible to translate musical form into physical gesture with complete transfer of information from one medium to the other. In this incomplete transaction lies great expressive potential. Music theorist Marianne Kielian-Gilbert writes:

> The sound of painting, the painterly aspects of music, the music in poetry, the movements of images/shots in film, or the specifics of a particular media/medium, involve the sensory integration, interface, and incompleteness of cross modal exchanges and the tension or gap


115 Ibid., 169.
between what is evoked experientially and what is imagined.¹¹⁶

The gap Kielian-Gilbert illuminates between media and their assemblages compels the viewer of a multidisciplinary performance to fill in missing information. When the cross-space mapping gap is small, for instance the literal translation of music into image, the audience perceives no missing information. Content is obvious and representational. One medium indicates the exact meaning of the other and requires no interpretive gesture from the audience. The greater the cavity between cross-linked assemblages of two media, the greater content remains non-representational.

Kielian-Gilbert highlights Roland Petit and Jean Cocteau’s ballet *Le Jeune Homme et La Mort*, which is grounded in the principle of accidental synchronization. Petit originally choreographed the ballet to a jazz composition only to replace the music just prior to the dress rehearsal with J.S. Bach’s *Passacaglia in C Minor*, BWV 582. One can imagine the physical gestures and music in the jazz version of the ballet aligned precisely with bursts of physical energy matching the music’s dynamic intensity. The version known to audiences captured in the film *White Nights* subsumes gestures from the jazz version into the broader dramatic trajectory of Bach’s passacaglia. While the dance-musical pairing of the jazz music and choreography was likely representational requiring limited interpretation from the perceiver, the incongruences between dance and sound of the classical-music rendition of the ballet transforms the emergent work into a non-representational performance necessitating interpretation. Petit’s original music pushed the movement and music toward analysis and risked exposing its truth content. The last minute musical substitution preserved the integrity of the ballet’s content. The

resultant multisensory ballet creates an emergent structure through a double-scope network and crafts a music-becoming-dance-becoming-music circulation of intensities. When audiences perceive a gap or mismatching of attributes between media, interpretation is required. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming is entrenched in this interpretive gap; the gap prevents a performance from representing its content.

In contrast, there are instances where video and music require literal translations of each other. Commercial advertisements broadcast on television often reinforce their messages with literal music. Imagine the 1973 commercial for Oscar Mayer bologna; the images of a child holding a bologna sandwich translates into a jingle literally spelling out and singing the brand of bologna to purchase (O-S-C-A-R M-A-Y-E-R).

Furthermore, it is the child in the commercial who sings and then takes a bite after spelling out B-O-L-O-G-N-A. It is exceptional advertising, yet few audiences confuse the mirror network found in commercials for a multisensory performance.

The Evolution of Music Videos

The genre of the music video, now over forty years mature and by nature a multidisciplinary platform, evolved from a literalist (mirror-network) form where the text of a song was visualized into a double-scope network where the text of a song is juxtaposed with a visual montage often unrelated to the original lyrics. Music videos progressed from a representational form into non-representational and multisensory art.

Music videos began as filmed performances of rock concerts that played when artists became ill or overbooked. With the rise of MTV, the form became stylized with costumes, lighting, sophisticated camera angles, and editing, yet these early attempts

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117 The commercial may be watched here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmPRHJd3uHI.
were direct visualizations of the musical and textual narrative. Meatloaf’s *I Would Do Anything For Love* (1993), directed by Michael Bay, is a late example of this stylized visualization of rock music. The video illustrates the fairytale of Beauty and the Beast with Meatloaf playing the beast. It is a love story that word for word portrays the text. The video transforms the music’s text into visual representations of the song revealing the music video’s content.

During the mid 1980s, music videos underwent a partial rejection of literalist forms; the excision of direct visualizations of music. Music-video theorist Heidi Peeters suggests that the surviving videos aimed toward the creation of a ‘star’:

> This center around which all visual, auditory, kinetic, narrative, commercial, social, communicational and artistic dimensions circle, turns out to be the star of the music video. The star is the one that lends the video world its splendor, that gives the audiovisual elements their enchanting attraction and that illuminates viewers all over the world from the Olympus of the screen. This may seem rather obvious, but one would be surprised at how the majority of theorists still consider music videos to be visualizations of a song.\(^{118}\)

While the star may be the featured performer or actor of the video, it may also be an object or idea. Stars are the result of the transference of identity and characteristics from one art form to another. The star is the result of a non-representational becoming process. The star of a music video absorbs elements of music, dance, lighting, and narrative to craft an entirely new character. The star of a music video begins as a specific person or object, like the wasp, but by absorbing the traits of all other media enters a fluid state of becoming. The additional traits make the star less representational instead of more. Videos with Peeters’ star characters are multisensory because the viewer experiences an emergent character and is motivated to develop an new idea.

Ritual and Multisensory Performance

D’Aquili and Newburgh define ritual as behavior that is patterned, rhythmic, repeatable, and serves to synchronize affect, perception, and physicalizations of individual participants. While this definition is helpful in the identification of potential ritual acts, the analysis of a ritual inherently deconstructs its component parts and exposes its content. To interpret baptism as a priest’s wetting of a child’s head with water and a prayer destroys the notion that a child is washed clean of original sin. To interpret the throwing of the bride’s bouquet as a contest for attention and a romantic encounter, subverts the ritual’s identification of the next potential couple. Emile Durkheim, French sociologist and ritual researcher, suggests in *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* that ritual practitioners have only a generalized notion of the meaning of a rite, “As a general rule, in fact, this efficacy is so imperfectly determined that the believer is able to form only a very vague notion of it.” Durkheim implies that this open-endedness allows for unintended synchronicities between sacred and secular realms, as an interpretive gap exists that will be filled by the ritual’s participants and observers. Ritual is a process of becoming with no beginning or end that extends beyond the momentary rite.

Multisensory Performance and Meredith Monk

For content to remain undesignated and mysterious (open ended and non-representational), the attributes of fusing media within a multisensory performance must maintain some discontinuity to allow for the audience to experience the puzzle with their

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119 D’Aquilli and Newberg, 89.
unique perspectives. The combination of text with a secondary medium is particularly
difficult to navigate as literal language gravitates toward imposing a specific meaning on
a work. For this reason, Meredith Monk almost always decides to excise intelligible
language from her works, choosing to use invented sounds, vocalizations, and even
languages. Monk creates vocal works, often rooted in non-western ritual, where texts
have no a priori content. The chasm between physical movement and text remains large
and the audience needs to interpret the performance to gain understanding. The
nonsensical text Monk uses is in a state of becoming language, just as it is also becoming
movement, and, perhaps, becoming ritual. Only with experience and interpretation does
the audience gain any insight. With audience interpretation, the perceiver experiences
the interaction of the component media of the performance. For Monk, these isolated
media appear haphazard unless conceived and interpreted as a single unit. The process of
becoming that occurs in Monk’s music safeguards non-representational content and
transforms her performances into multisensory experiences.
“Fields/Clouds,” “Plague,” and “Cave Song” from Meredith Monk’s film *Book of Days* offer illustrations of Fauconnier and Turner’s mirror, single-scope, and double-scope conceptual blending networks. Secondly, the role that becoming plays in each movement and its relationship to the emergent structure will be discussed. Although perception of performance and content are inherently subjective, the media inputs, cross-space mapping, assemblages, and blended structures of conceptual blending are determinable. A film in its own right, Monk’s *Book of Days* uses primarily visual and musical media inputs.

Each investigation initiates with a brief structural analysis of the music and a formal examination of the visual imagery to acquaint the reader with interacting aural and visual elements. The analysis investigates each medium from the vantage of Fauconnier and Turner’s conceptual blending model to determine inputs, assemblages, cross-space mapping, and emergent structure of the blended space. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of becoming will allow categorization of each excerpt as a multimedia, multisensory, or multidisciplinary performance.

**“Fields/Clouds”: Single Blends**

“Fields/Clouds” occurs after Eva departs a Jewish festival of dancing and singing to seek the crone, a wise woman who is feared because of her beliefs and lifestyle choices. The crone is ostracized from the village and lives as a recluse on its margins. Eva believes the crone, portrayed by Meredith Monk, holds the interpretive key to her
visions. After finding the crone, Eva returns to the end of the festival for dinner. She continues to draw images of modern devices on the walls of her home. That evening, as the family sleeps in a one-room dwelling, Eva and her Grandfather rest peacefully together, yet it is clear from other bodies in the room that the family is deceased and plague is insinuated as the culprit. As “Fields/Clouds” commences, the film suddenly cuts away from Eva to a series of antiquated continental maps. Each chart is paired with a clip of native, tribal, or aboriginal inhabitant subsistence and concludes with a freeze frame of these inhabitants. The scene concludes with images of the moon and a return to the original blast hole in the brick wall from the construction work at the beginning of the film. The music of “Fields/Clouds” accompanies this abstract voyage through time and space only to return the film to its initial point of departure.

Meredith Monk’s compositional method, grounded in minimalism, utilizes a system of additive structures that stack short melodic or harmonic fragments until a larger melody, harmony, and structure surfaces (Figure 4-1). Monk chooses a single motive as a ground for the piece and adds layers of vocal lines above and below. Individual melodies are repeated, sometimes hundreds of iterations, yet the piece remains dynamic through the addition and subtraction of motives. The procedure of additive structures is a process of becoming in the Deleuze and Guattari configuration and includes metamorphic transformations; the recombination of vocal and instrumental lines conceivably continues indefinitely.

The dynamic additive musical structure of “Fields/Clouds” is accompanied by a static organ. Monk develops seven individual melodic vocal fragments that are layered and amalgamated into twelve recombinant ideas. The movement is structured in three
larger sections. Section I consists of the static organ motive and female vocal Motives A-D. Section II ceases all female singing and initiates male vocal Motives E, A’, B’, and F; melodies A’ and B’ are identical to motives from Section I. The third section adds a female whole-step melody, Motive G, above the men’s polyphony and concludes by abruptly excising the organ and male voices to leave only the women’s whole-tone motive in phase at the eighth-note.

The movement’s harmonic structure is driven by the organ motive in the A-Aeolian mode. Three chords persist in the organ accompaniment and suggest the progression: F major, D minor, A minor. While vocal Motives A and B reinforce the F-d-a harmonic progression, the high D of vocal Motive C shifts the harmonies to d7-d-a. Additionally, Motive D strengthens the altered progression away from F major as it alternates the major-second motive D-E.
Viewed as the third of D minor, the tone F is emphasized in measure 8 where the organ suddenly changes its pattern adding a low F-pedal tone. The pedal tone is the octave displacement of the initial F of the left hand and functions as the 6th of a 6/4 chord above A that resolves on beat three to A minor-5/3. The D minor-7th chord on beat two is a prolongation of the 6-5 suspension and the F-pedal tone is the continuation of the suspended 6th above A minor.

The interpretation of the harmonic plan of the work as i6/4-i5/3 in A minor is bolstered by dyads at play in “Fields/Clouds.” The A-C dyad is repeated indefinitely in the right hand of the organ and outlines A minor, yet the role of the B-D dyad is less clear. In light of the harmonic progression, the repeated D becomes the suspended 4th of the larger i6/4 chord, while the B is a passing tone between A and C outlining A minor.

Monk’s use of minor-second dyads (A-C, B-D of Organ Motive I) initially strengthens the pitch center of “Fields/Clouds;” the repeated G-A dyad of Motive B is an accented lower-neighbor tone to the tonal center. The strength of the A tonal center is weakened with the entrance of the syncopated Motive G. While the tone D functions as the suspended 4th above A, the E implies a C-major triad. When all voices drop out except Motives G1 and G2, both comprised of the D-E dyad, the tonal center migrates to E (major/minor is unknown). The G-A dyad centered in A minor compels the listener to hear the D as the lower neighbor to E. The D-E dyad is foreshadowed in Motive D, yet in this early context the E sounds as the fifth of A rather than a new tonal center. This argument is strengthened by the motive’s final two notes that end on E. If the ensuing movement began in E, the perception of a final cadence on E would be confirmed. The next musical entrance is in C minor, therefore the listener must accommodate the
unsettled final harmonic progression. Monk’s phasing of Motives G1 and G2 by a single eighth note blurs the modal orientation. Of the eight eighth-note pulses in the final measure, six align as major seconds. A unison E occurs on the final pulse and affords the cadential moment of “Fields/Clouds,” though the progressive modal scheme of the work suggests an open-endedness to the music.

To examine the movement from the perspective of Fauconnier and Turner’s conceptual blending model, a collection of observations is needed that identifies the individual assemblages within the music. The compositional model, as mentioned earlier, is one of perpetual motion and additive structures that ends with a final unison E. The tripartite structure of female, male, and combined voices is an assemblage that will match or grate against the structure of the film’s accompanying visuals. The organ ties the music to sacred genres while the vocalists connect the work to choral traditions. The partitioning of vocalists into female and male polyphonic sections is suggestive of dialogue and is strengthened by the overlapping of male/female gender motives in Section III. The polyphony links the music to early music, sacred music, and attributes of ancient ritual. The music uses syllables that are neutral (to, te, wa, ah); they convey a sense of an unknown language as they are constructed from syllables present in European romance languages, but are combined or extracted from no known complete word or context.\textsuperscript{121} The tempo of “Fields/Clouds” is $\textit{c}=75$ and potentially matches movement in the film or of the film editing (this will be further explored in Figure 4-2). Finally, overlapping motives build a cacophonous polyphonic texture that potentially signifies commotion and action beyond the steady tempo of the quarter-note pulse.

\textsuperscript{121} Swedish composer Thomas Jennefelt recombined Latin syllables to create a meaningless text that sounds like a functional language in his choral cycle \textit{Claviante Brilloso}. 

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The filmic structure of “Fields/Clouds” highlights seven visual segments of action. The first segment is of Eva and her grandfather deceased in bed together. Segments two through six pair continental maps with indigenous inhabitants: a map of Persia is linked with an ornately dressed woman applying makeup, a South American map is linked with an Incan-like native swinging a slingshot, a North American map is paired with native American Indians working in a streambed, a Japanese map is linked with a man serving tea in a teahouse, and an African map is juxtaposed with a tribe seated around a fire. Segment seven is of the moon with clouds passing by at night. Grouping the images further, three larger sections stand out: Eva with her grandfather, the journey through cultures and maps, and the moon. The largest devotion of time is allotted to the continental journeys. The nested structures of the film are assemblages that prioritize concepts of global traveling, within time and space, and connecting indigenous tribes of one continent with tribes from all continents, interconnectedness.

Biological operators within the human brain unconsciously search for a cause and effect relationship between music and images. While it is expected that many of the musical and film segments potentially align, the correspondence appears unintentional. Although Section III of the film and music align, Sections I and II, the larger portions, do not correspond precisely across media. Figure 4-2 illustrates correspondences between the middle-ground structures of the music and film; synchronization occurs within segments two, five, and six and only within single scenes of these segments, not the complete map-inhabitant pair. The absence of direct musical-film congruence forces viewers to reevaluate their interpretation of the music as emanating from the people in
the images. While the vocal melodies match well in segment two and can be interpreted as the sounds of Africa and Persia, this structural mapping dissolves quickly.

Cross-space mapping occurs between music and visuals. Specifically, the lack of coherent language (sung or spoken) in either the music or film is mapped between media along with elements of internal structures. These partial structural correspondences allow the viewer to loosely associate vocal melodies with specific native inhabitants. These assemblages are projected into the blended space, though their prominence in the blend is minimal. Independent of cross-space mapping, each input projects individual features into the blend. The music projects the mystery of an unknown language, while the film projects the character of Eva and her journey through time and space. Drawn from the generic space of the larger film-music composite, the concepts of plague and visions/dreams are projected into the blended space.

The emergent structure is not directly associated with either the music or film inputs (Figure 4-3). The blend of music and film suggests that while Eva and her family are deceased, the observer witnesses Eva’s visions as a single flash akin to the adage of viewing one’s life “flash before your eyes” at the moment of death. The emergent structure is neither music nor image, rather it is a posthumous dream, vision, or memory.

Figure 4-2: Film and musical structures compared from Monk’s “Fields/Clouds”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUSICAL STRUCTURE</th>
<th>FILM VISUALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Section 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:06:40 – Organ Motive 1</td>
<td>1:06:40 – Music begins, organ – Eva and Grandfather lying peacefully in single bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:06:50 – Melodic Motive A</td>
<td>1:06:51 – Map of Africa with arrow to center of it, non-specific location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:07:00 – Melodic Motive B</td>
<td>1:06:59 – Map of Persia, with arrow to non-specific location, unidentified location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:07:13 – Organ Motive 2</td>
<td>1:07:06 – Persian woman applying makeup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:07:15 – Melodic Motive C</td>
<td>1:07:19 – South America Map with arrow pointing to unidentified location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:07:26 – Melodic Motive D</td>
<td>1:07:21 – Man dressed in native-American clothing (Incan) swinging hand held slingshot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:07:35 – Melodic Motive E</td>
<td>1:07:30 – Map of North America – arrow pointing to unidentified location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:07:43 – Melodic Motive F</td>
<td>1:07:32 – Native Americans, woman and two children, working in stream, grinding grains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:07:49 – Melodic Motive C</td>
<td>1:07:42 – Map of Japan, unidentified location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:07:57 – Melodic Motive D</td>
<td>1:07:46 – Man seated on the ground in Japanese teahouse, pouring teapot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:08:03 – Melodic Motive G</td>
<td>1:08:06 – Map of Africa again, new arrow in unidentified location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:08:17 – Melodic Motive G</td>
<td>1:08:27 – The African tribes people, seated around small burning fire, smiling/laughing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:08:38 – Music Ends</td>
<td>1:08:38 – Image of moon with clouds passing by</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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122 Times are notated in hours, minutes, and seconds from the complete film, *Book of Days.*
of Eva. The emergent structure of the dream suggests the scene is governed by a double-scope network.

Figure 4-3: Double-Scope network of Monk’s “Fields/Clouds”

The vocal music of *Fields/Clouds* ties the viewer to the corporeal while the images of continents and inhabitants connects audiences to time and space travel. The death of Eva and her family allows the viewer to perceive the scene as a memory. Whether knowingly or not, audiences participate in a double-scope network where Eva’s memory arises from two inputs that do not convey this content in isolation.

A sense of becoming is necessary, an emergent structure whose content is open-ended, to determine whether the scene is multisensory. The music and visuals each contain a unique content (harmonic structure and clearly identified maps and inhabitants), yet when the media are combined, the composite content is non-representational. The
content of the combined form is not fully comprehended. The sounds and images do not analyze each other; the filmic structure created contains new content that requires audience interpretation to comprehend. The visionary dream is the result of the double-scope network, while the non-representational and new content is the result of a becoming process: vocals-becoming-image-becoming-dream. A multisensory event arises from two specific media inputs. The combination of a double-scope network with the scene’s sense of becoming results in a multisensory performance.

“Plague”: Chain of Blends

A tension exists between the medieval Christians (dressed in all white) and Jewish villagers (dressed in all black) in Book of Days. Deaths occur throughout both religious communities, yet Christian villagers band together to attack the Jewish people believing they are the cause for the paramount losses. A lone priest wards off the angry mob sending them home and away from the Jewish section of the village. Monk films the aggression of the Christians and the devastation of the disease. Employing a montage effect, the scene cuts between images of a chanting mob of men and women dressed in all white and decrepit, seizing, and suffering people of both cultures dying from the plague.

The music of “Plague”\textsuperscript{123} is a spoken chant that mixes fragmented whispered syllables with a single line of text, “We know who you are.” The music of the studio recording is organized into two discrete sections. Section I begins with a single rhythmic

\textsuperscript{123} Two versions of the music exist, one accompanies the film and a second elaborated version exists on the studio album. The more intricate album recording will be analyzed and differences between it and the video recording are noted where appropriate.
phrase, Fragment A, whispering repeatedly the syllables “Comp-ta-ti-ti-la ti-ti-la-tee.”  

(Figure 4-4) Monk treats this passage in eight-four meter to a standard-practice minimalistic phase, specifically, an abrupt phase similar to Steve Reich’s *Clapping Music*. The eighth-note driven pattern is offset in each of eight repetitions by a single quarter note. The treatment of the motive crafts a rhythmic and carefully structured event that sounds chaotic. After all voices enter in the round the performers intensify the chant with increasing volume until they reach a shouting dynamic, the climax of the first section.

Figure 4-4: Musical structure and melodic fragments of Monk’s “Plague”

![Musical structure and melodic fragments of Monk’s “Plague”](image)

After a brief silence, rhythmic Fragment A begins again as a whisper without phasing. In Section II Monk subjects Fragment A to the additive structure procedure rather than a new style of phasing. Unlike “Fields/Clouds,” which remains in the same meter throughout the movement, “Plague” mixes meters with ease, similar to Panda Chant II. The combination of mixed vocal meters is a hallmark of Monk compositions.
Fragments A, B, C, D, and F all use eight-four meter, while Fragment E is composed in six-four meter and Fragment G is composed in twelve-eight meter. While all fragments maintain a constant eighth-note pulse, the staggered entrances and mixed meters create a work with shifting accents that never repeats the same collective phrase twice. The conclusion of Section II consists of two identical fragments with the same pattern; Fragment G is phased with G’ offset by a single eighth note. Cross accents obscure the downbeat for the twelve-eight meter fragments. Conversely, Fragment B is a metrical stabilization force that emphasizes pulses 1, 3, 5, and 7. Similarly, Fragment C adheres to metrically strong pulses with its gentle lilt. Fragment D, while still in eight-four meter, fights against the grain of the strong pulses and maintains a phrase that crosses the strength of the bar line to obscure the downbeat for the entire texture. By disguising the downbeat, Fragment D opens rhythmic space for the entrance of the mixed meters found in Fragments E and G and the phasing of Fragments F and G.

Fragment F enters the texture of Section II unnoticed halfway through the additive process. Soft voices quietly whisper, “We know who you are.” The accusatory statement grows louder until all other voices are silenced near the conclusion of Section II. A phased version of this fragment aggressively emerges from this silence. Section II and the entire movement conclude with a return of phased Fragments G and G’ fading into silence. Despite Monk’s use of the additive structure process as the overarching force in Section II, echoes of the traditional phasing from Section I exist in Fragments G and F. These resonances unite the two sections beyond the shared building block of Fragment A.
The film’s version of “Plague” is a reduced edition of the studio-recorded version. Fragments C, F, and G are altogether missing, yet the overall form persists. Section I repeats Fragment A three times. In Section II, Fragment A is phased as a round at the quarter-note pulse. Layered on top of this phasing are Fragments B, D, and E. The absence of Fragment F, the whispered, “We know who you are,” removes the specificity of language from the music and maintains a completely neutral-syllable vocabulary. The loss of Fragments F and G causes the scene to suddenly stop after the addition of Fragment E, rather than an alternation of Fragments F and G and a gradual fade. Silence becomes the cadential element in the film version of “Plague.”

Monk initially devises a structure and develops melodic and rhythmic forms that contrapuntally fit together within this framework. It is possible that the CD version represents her original conception of the work, yet due to time limitations of the film’s scene, sections of the music warranted excision. It is equally possible that Monk developed “Plague” further to allow the work to exist without the aid of the film on the studio album. The flexibility of her structures to absorb improvisational changes by the performers as well as new outgrowths from the rehearsal process is grounded in her additive compositional process.

The visuals of “Plague” interweave five film passages: a map of the medieval village slowly covered in red, a bald man dressed in half white and half black attire (he is neither Jewish or Christian) performing an aggressive and angular modern dance, footage of men, women, and children suffering, body bags amassing in the village plaza, and a crowd of men and women dressed in all white rallying. Rather than edit the footage together sequentially, Monk cuts between scenes to connect two to four second
segments of each film passage (Figure 4-5). Three individual film segments do not correspond to these five scenic categories: a sand painting blown away, a clip of Eva smiling, and Eva’s darkened household front door.

At the apex of “Plague” is a protesting crowd dressed in white, the Christians, which occupies the longest uninterrupted film segment, approximately one minute in length. A priest attempts to quell the crowd’s anger and send them home. An unidentified interviewer off camera queries the priest as to why the crowd is irate. He responds, “They don’t know what they are doing. They want to go to the Jewish quarter. It is hatred. They say the Jews are responsible for this. But everybody’s dying, Jews, Christians, man, woman. I’m sorry I cannot talk to you anymore.” This internal scene indicates that Christians blame the Jewish people for the village’s plague. The priest serves as the guardian of tolerance and rationality between the two religious factions. His resistance to the mob suggests that not all Christian villagers are swept up in the anti-Semitic accusations.
The film’s assemblages include images of death, suffering, bodies, religious tension, and physical shouting and chanting. The bald, male dancer is also an assemblage, yet his physical movements do not directly reinforce ideas in the other images. Eva and her story of premonitions are also assemblages without obvious meaning. When music and visuals are compared the music aligns perfectly with the chanting crowd of Christians at the center of the scene. The musical repetitions do not correspond with the editing speed. While the physical chanting cross-maps directly to the music, there are few other linked assemblages between the two inputs.

Because Monk interweaves excerpts of several independent scenes together, chanting, images of death, modern dance, and Eva smiling, it is impossible to treat the scene as a single conceptual blend. Rather each of these inputs interacts in a chain of blends similar to the ritual of a wedding or the baptism of a child where an infant is baptized and the congregation then renews their baptism; one event initiates the second.

“Plague’s” strongest conceptual blend is the chanting crowd. This blended space
contains the aggressive chanters and all the whispered music. At time-stamp 1:02:35 the
observer suddenly connects the music with the image to recognize the scene as one of
Christian aggression and protesting. The recipient of the hostility is unknown in this
initial blend. This is an example of a mirror network, a literal representation, as the
music’s primary purpose is to reinforce the visual image of the crowd shouting (Figure 4-6A). Because it is a mirror network, its content is representational and is not conducive
to creating a multimedia or multisensory performance.

A single-scope network arises between the original mirror network of Christian
protestors, the red village map, and the dying townspeople (Figure 4-6B). The blend
fuses the ire of the crowd with the images of death, suffering, and disease. It is a single-
scope network because the structures are not projected equally into the blended space;
the protestors occupy the longest continuous visual clip and assume greater prominence
in the blend. The protestors are angry about the plague that afflicts their village. If the
weight of the inputs is reversed, the resultant hypothetical blend suggests that the plague
is the result of the protests, which is not a viable concept in the context of the complete
film. Because the images of death explain why the Christians protest, one medium
analyses the other and the blend is not multisensory. Interpretive options are limited by
the single-scope blend and it is neither multimedia nor multisensory.

The chain of blends continues with the inclusion of images of body bags as one
input and the secondary blend of Christians angry about the progressing plague in a
single-scope network as the second input (Figure 4-6C). The body bags are colored
black and white and encode Christian and Jewish deaths. Throughout the scene the
number of white body bags remains significantly greater than the number of black bags
and suggests that Christians are disproportionally affected by the plague. A single-scope network arises from the fusion of these inputs where the Christian protestors blame the Jewish villagers for the plague. This is confirmed by the text of the priest. The framework for the blend stems from the secondary blend of Christians protesting the plague and is influenced by the disproportionate number of Christian to Jewish deaths. To confirm the model, reverse the weight of the inputs and the hypothetical blend suggests that body bags are the result of the clamoring Christians. While it is possible that the Christians may have attacked the Jewish population, this is unexpected since the priest is seen holding the mob at bay. The content of this single-scope network is not multisensory as one input analyzes the second.
The three blends, the initial mirror network and the linked single-scope networks, are necessary to create the complete idea of Christians who blame Jewish villagers for the plague. This chain of blends establishes a subject, motive, and recipient for the visual and musical components.

None of the three blends are multimedia or multisensory. The conceptual blend of the chanting Christians is representational with no interpretive gap between the music
and visuals. The music and visuals explain each other and leave no room for audience interpretation. In particular, the only true text of the music, “We know who you are,” suggests the Christians hold someone responsible for the disease, though this only appears on the studio recording. The single-scope networks are also instances of non-multisensory performances, as the scenes of death indicate a reason for the Christians’ outrage; the blend’s content is representational.

The dancing man (in black and white dress) and Eva provide two independent double-scope blends (Figure 4-7). The dancer’s attire delineates him as neither Christian nor Jewish and the abstract nature of his choreography does not correspond directly with the music. This gap opens space for interpretation. The structure projected into the blend does not emerge from the sonic or visual inputs. Instead, the dancer adopts what could be interpreted as the physical manifestation of the struggle between the two religious cultures. He is outside the narrative of the story, and he potentially represents the internal conflict of the two cultures. His content remains hidden as abstract music and movement transfer assemblages without divulging meaning; a multisensory blend occurs.
Figure 4-7: Double-Scope networks in Monk’s “Plague”
The image of Eva’s face with a tranquil expression, similarly, opens a double-scope network. The menacing quality of the music and Eva’s calm disposition are at odds. The projected blend contains both attributes, but the emergent structure suggests that Eva is pleased with the religious struggle or the virility of the plague. The content, again, remains hidden as the music and Eva’s facial expressions are non-representational. The blends of the dancer and Eva are multisensory blends. Table 4-1 summarizes the conceptual blends and becoming-multisensory relationships of each cognitive integration network.

Table 4-1: Summary and sequence of blend networks in Monk’s “Plague”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUT</th>
<th>Conceptual Blend</th>
<th>Multisensory, Multimedia, and/or Multidisciplinary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Music and Christian Protest</td>
<td>Mirror Network</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 1 + Death, Suffering</td>
<td>Single-Scope</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 2 + more Christian than Jewish deaths</td>
<td>Single-Scope</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Dancing Man + Music</td>
<td>Double-Scope</td>
<td>Multimedia + Multisensory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Eva Smiling + Music</td>
<td>Double-Scope</td>
<td>Multimedia + Multisensory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conceptual blending offers snapshots out time, within a discursive environment, of the complete work’s affect. The blends listed in Table 4-1 occur in a cognitive mental space and are not an experiential account of the scene. The composite visual and musical material is dispersed throughout the entire scene; the order found in Table 4-1 is one potential reading of the collected observations. It is possible for another observer to reorder the sequence and produce a differing account of the composite blend.
“Cave Song”: A Blend of Blends

The conceptual blend of “Cave Song” results from the combination of two independent blends that occur before and after this scene. Comprised from melodies sung by Eva and the crone, “Cave Song” blends “Eva’s Song,” first heard earlier in the film as a solo, with “Madwoman’s Vision,” which is encountered as a solo immediately following “Cave Song.” During “Cave Song,” Eva searches for answers in the company of the village crone, a woman who is ostracized by the village for her own visions and radical lifestyle choice to remain single. Portrayed by Meredith Monk, the crone is visually mute, whimsical, and misunderstood. After inviting Eva into her cave, the two sit in silence before dancing, drinking, and sleeping. After Eva leaves, the crone receives her own vision in “Madwoman’s Vision.” To understand the type of blend at work in “Cave Song,” “Eva’s Song” and “Madwoman’s Vision” must first be examined.

Early in Book of Days, Eva sits in a field near a cemetery and describes her premonitions to her grandfather. Characterizing her dreams as dangerous, the grandfather ends the conversation and suggests he teach her a song, a distraction to change the subject. Phrase by phrase the grandfather teaches a text-less melody that viewers internalize as “Eva’s Song;” Eva repeats each phrase until she joins in wholeheartedly. The three phrase monophonic melody is in F# natural-minor. The lowered leading tone eliminates any dominant-tonic relationships present in the melody (Figure 4-8). Relating the melody to the visuals of the medieval village, Eva’s tune is reminiscent of a folk melody in Aeolian mode transposed to F#. The folk nature of the song lends itself to a modal interpretation, as is the case with “Fields/Clouds.”
“Eva’s Song” is a mirror network; the unfolding music directly reflects what is occurring on screen. The cross-space mapping aligns sound with image precisely and both inputs possess identical structures. The content is restricted as the only purpose of the music and the visuals is to teach Eva a song. Using only the syllable Na, the grandfather distracts Eva from her visions by singing. When the “Eva’s Song” melody returns in “Cave Song” the viewer recognizes the haunting tune as a signifier for Eva’s attributes, her visions, and character traits because of this mirror network. “Eva’s Song” undergoes a process of becoming only when placed in the context of “Cave Song” and takes on new content in this new context. Eva and her melody are not multisensory in “Eva’s Song’s” original context.

A similar process unfolds for the “Madwoman’s Vision” except the song of the crone is encountered initially as part of the blend of “Cave Song.” The observer encounters the melody first in duet with “Eva’s Song” before it returns as the crone’s vision moments later. The melody of “Madwoman’s Vision” and the version that appears in “Cave Song” are not identical or even true variations of one another. Rather, they exhibit similar compositional structures that link the two melodies. While both melodies span a major sixth, more integral is the repetitious nature of the individual
motives that comprise the melody. The crone’s music in “Cave Song” establishes the framework of a melody, but with each repetition she alters the order and number of repetitions of the minor-third motive between C# and E. Similarly, in “Madwoman’s Vision,” a melodic structure is built out of a descending whole step followed by a filled-in descent of a major third from D# to B. Monk then alters the rhythm, order, and number of repetitions of these motives (Figure 4-9).

In contrast to the crone’s variable melodies, Eva’s tune is fixed and remains identical with each repetition. Listeners associate registers with specific characters; although the tessitura of the crone in “Cave Song” is higher than that of “Madwoman’s Vision,” both ranges lie well below the tessitura of Eva’s melody.

The melody from “Madwoman’s Vision” fuses B major and minor scales with a lowered leading tone, again to suggest a folk music aesthetic. The major-minor inflection is
followed by a spiraling chromatic motive: F#-E#-D-double-sharp, a chromatic third and the opposite of the major third that makes up the major third motive.

The music and film of the “Madwoman’s Vision” is akin to the relationship of film and music in Hitchcock’s *Psycho* where Marion’s erratic psychology emerges as a new framework from the pairing of divergent music and images. In “Madwoman’s Vision,” the film begins with an image of the top half of the crone’s face, her mouth is omitted and the camera focuses on her eyes. The film never shows the crone’s mouth moving. The images turn to violent contemporary events, wars, natural disasters, solar flares, and 1980s New York City. Eva’s black-and-white world and the medieval village transform into a technicolor montage of images and an emergent structure rises. Film and music together create the double-scope network of the crone’s vision by juxtaposing modal music and images of contemporary history (Figure 4-10).

**Figure 4-10: Conceptual blend networks of “Eva’s Song” and “Madwoman’s Vision”**
Similar to “Eva’s Song,” the crone’s “Cave Song” melody outlines the Aeolian mode on F#, and suggests a structural connection between the two characters. The melody outlines tonic and minor-dominant triads (A-F#-C# and C#-E- (G#)). Supporting the melodies of Eva and the crone is a synthesized lute that strums tonic 6-4 chords passing between tonic and minor-dominant chords. Figure 4-11 outlines the three-part structure of “Cave Song,” which beings with Eva’s melody repeated twice before the crone’s duet enters. After two iterations of Eva and the crone in counterpoint, the lute enters and all three parts are heard twice. The movement concludes with a brief silence interrupted by Eva’s voice whispering, “It’s a place I’ve never seen before. They walk on grey ground. I hear a dead noise. Many people are falling. They can’t breathe. There is no air. Everyone is sick. It is hot. I’m afraid. I’m afraid.” Eva then leaves the cave and “Madwoman’s Vision” commences.
During “Cave Song,” Eva and the crone are never seen vocalizing, though they do engage in communal dancing, sharing a cup of an unknown liquid, creating a sand painting, and sleeping (Figure 4-12). It is with the addition of the repetitive music that the scene assumes the structure of a ritual ceremony. The music removes each individual action of Eva and the crone from ordinary daily activities, sharing a meal, dancing, sleeping, and creating art, and transforms them into ceremonial actions intended to conjure the visions of Eva and the crone. It is not unexpected, then, that “Madwoman’s Vision” follows “Cave Song;” the ritual is followed by the premonition it conjured.
The emergent ritualized actions result from a double-scope network between the musical and visual inputs. The music connects repeated melodies with repeated dance patterns. The modal quality of the music is linked with the folk art quality of the sand painting, further strengthened by the ‘primitive’ cave dwelling and medieval village.124 The music does not map directly onto the speed of film editing or the physical movements of singing or the dance. It remains detached from any direct connection to the corporeal aspects of Eva and the crone. The structures of the film and music do not map onto each other as the number of sections is incongruent and no sections align. The ritual structure of the scene is neither part of the music or imagery. Ritual arises from the

124 Care should be give to the pejorative nature of terms such as folk art and primitive art. These terms are used here because the filmmakers and actors attempt to conjure these stereotypes; they are intentionally playing against these schema.
fusion of the two equally weighted components and characteristics from the generic space that include Eva’s mirror network, the crone’s network, the medieval village, religious festival, and Jewish and Christian worship practices (Figure 4-13).

“Cave Song” is reliant upon the mirror network of “Eva’s Song” and the double-scope network of “Madwoman’s Vision,” reflected retroactively, to create a new double-scope network with new content. The initial mirror network of “Eva’s Song” directly links the melody to Eva’s character. Because the audience associates “Eva’s Song” when it returns in “Cave Song” with Eva, they then associate the new melody with the crone. This musical connection is confirmed with the double-scope network established in “Madwoman’s Vision.” Viewers retroactively corroborate this assumption. If both melodies were new to the viewer, or neither melody was previously tied to a character through a mirror network, the emergent structure of “Cave Song” would not exist. The observer would continually reevaluate the scene and suppress the emergence of a ritual ceremony, which is the new content.
The emergent structure is fluid with music becoming image and image becoming music through a process of becoming ritual: music-becoming-image-becoming-ritual and image-becoming-music-becoming-ritual. The content of the ritual remains non-representational; the scene is multisensory and creates a multimedia and multisensory performance.
CHAPTER 5
POST HOC, ERGO PROPTER HOC

Receptivity, Emotional Contagion, and Conceptual Blending

Meredith Monk’s *Book of Days* effectively illustrates the conceptual blending models of Fauconnier and Turner. Combined with d’Aquili and Newberg’s modeling of cognitive operators that create cause and effect relationships when none are immediately perceived, conceptual blending offers a reasonable estimation for the understanding and prediction of multimedia performances and their resultant emergent structures. What is missing from the model is a discussion of audience willingness to engage in these psychological artistic experiences.

In 2007, a team of arts marketing and psychological researchers lead by the University of Florida, Gainesville, initiated a study to measure the intrinsic impact a theatrical performance has on the audience. Their purpose was to better understand the desires of their audiences, yet their methodology is now being applied to a broader context of understanding the behavior of large crowds. According to their study, intrinsic impact is not a single measurement, but rather a survey of the emotional impact of a performance and the willingness of an individual to receive this impact, the readiness-to-receive factor. The readiness-to-receive inventory measured prior to the performance how much knowledge an audience has of the witnessed art, its relevance to an audience, how comfortable they are attending the performance, and the amount of anticipation an audience has (how excited and focused is the audience). Emotional impact was constructed via measurements of 1.) captivation, 2.) intellectual stimulation, 3.) emotional resonance, 4.) spiritual value, 5.) aesthetic growth, and 6.) social bonding. The
findings suggest that higher levels of readiness, specifically, feelings of positive anticipation, lead to concerts imparting greater impact upon listeners.\textsuperscript{125}

Emotions have the capacity to spread unconsciously from one audience member to another like wildfire. This phenomenon is called emotional contagion by psychology researchers and is rooted in the unconscious mimicking of physical attributes in juxtaposed individuals. Researchers writing in \textit{Current Directions in Psychological Science} suggest that a feedback loop exists where an individual’s emotional state is altered moment to moment by the facial, postural, vocal, and extremity movement of surrounding individuals.\textsuperscript{126} This mirroring and mimicking process not only manifests a physical expression, but it allows the individual to adopt the emotional states of those around them. Further, it occurs with little conscious awareness of the participants and with great speed.\textsuperscript{127}

An audience’s readiness to receive a performance, along with their ability to spread that emotional state as an emotional contagion, suggests that a performance, whether multimedia or traditional, may be significantly impacted by the state of a small group of audience members upon walking in the door. The conceptual blending model does not factor in the emotional willingness or prior emotional state of an observer when predicting an emergent structure. Conceptual blending, therefore, is most predictive of an emergent structure when an audience is primed for receptivity. The model operates

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\textsuperscript{127} Ibid. 99.
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under ideal conditions well, but is not flexible enough to take into consideration the emotional capacity of an audience to affect and to be affected.

Intrinsic impact and emotional contagion become particularly important when a multimedia performance appears to fail. The conceptual blending model may suggest that an emergent structure from a double-scope network should arise under any performance conditions, yet audiences can leave a performance clearly unmoved or disinterested. Conceptual blending has no means to determine whether the performance was a failure because of the content of the emergent structure or because an emotional contagion spread through the audience that prevented engagement with the performance.

**Studio Albums and Performance Editions**

Twice a year the House Foundation, Meredith Monk’s financial and production company, holds a composition workshop for emerging artists. While minimalist musicians admire Monk for her musical compositions, the modern dance community venerates her as a choreographic innovator. Artists who register for Monk’s composition workshop interpret the advertisement as pertaining to either musical or dance composition, not both.¹²⁸ The resultant workshop ultimately pairs dancers fearful of singing with musicians resistant to physical movement. Awkward beginnings develop into a multimedia-multisensory composition workshop with musicians dancing and dancers singing.

Monk’s perspective that music and movement that is composed in tandem creates original content explains her hesitancy to transcribe the musical portions of her

¹²⁸ The Wikipedia page for Meredith Monk separates her performance oeuvre into vocal and instrumental compositions with no mention of their relationship to movement.
performances for solo chorus, effectively separating music from movement. Only two of Monk’s works from multimedia productions are published for choral ensemble, *Panda Chant II* and *Astronaut Anthem*. *Three Heavens and Hells* was commissioned as a freestanding choral work by the Young People’s Chorus of New York and “Airport” from her opera *Atlas*, commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera, exists as a published manuscript in *Contemporary Anthology of Music by Women* edited by James R. Briscoe and not as a performance edition.

Monk regularly records studio albums of her productions including *Book of Days, Ellis Island, Songs of Ascension, Education of the Girlchild, Atlas, Impermanence*, and *Quarry*. Marketable albums may be a necessity of artistic life driven by the need to create revenue to fund future productions and to create national and international brand recognition. The existence of Monk’s albums suggest her compositions can be separated from their physical/visual components and retain meaningful content.

A studio recording disembodies the music from any visuals and allows a performance to exist in the mind of the listener. Alternatively, a performance in a concert hall recombines the music with the aesthetic of the modern concert experience, which is rooted in social norms of the turn of the 20th century. The assemblages of a performance experience in a concert hall include clear distinctions between audience and musicians, silence and applause at codified moments, programs with explanations of the music, and a strong fourth wall, a psychological barrier that prevents communication between observer and performer. While the studio recording is consumed as an individual experience in a host of environments, the concert experience is a communal acceptance of a specific stoic and emotionally reserved aesthetic. The additive-structure
process by which Monk frames her compositions is a dynamic practice of becoming; it is inherently multisensory and resists the frame and conventions of the concert hall. It is logical to suggest that the few performance editions of her music may be a protectionary measure to prevent her music from forming a conceptual blend with the concert-hall aesthetic.

A hypothetical blend of Monk’s music fusing with the concert-hall aesthetic is not a mirror network because the two inputs do not use identical frameworks. In conventional cultural contexts, the performance in a concert hall supports connections that are not usually perceived to be part of a process of becoming; it is typically seen as a more neutral venue for fixed musical presentation. The concert hall is the museum exhibition hall of the musical realm where compositions, insofar as they are presented within established concert protocol, are static dioramas where physical/sonic interactions are discouraged. The traditional classical performance venue is reserved for pre-composed music, works codified on paper, and music created by a single composer with limited creative input from the performers. The performers are interpreters rather than creators.

A conceptual blend that fuses Meredith Monk’s music with the classical concert aesthetic potentially removes the dynamic, spontaneous, and many of the multisensory qualities from the performance. While the notes and rhythms of her compositions are retained, the spirit of co-creativity and the need for interpretation is lost. The music’s content is colored by the rigidity of the concert hall and the conventions of absolute music. This blend takes the form of a single-scope network where traditional concert-hall aesthetics contaminate the target domain, Monk’s music (Figure 5-1).
A performance’s multisensory nature is linked to the way the involved media interact, but also potentially to the expectations an audience may bring to the site of performance. “Fields/Clouds,” within the context of the film *Book of Days*, may create a multisensory event where sound and visual images transfer assemblages without divulging their content. When performed in a concert hall, the expectation of codified and canonic so-called Classical music may affect the audience’s connection to the improvisatory and co-creative content of Monk’s music. The additive-structure process that projected a fluid form in “Fields/Clouds” is potentially demarcated as a fixed structure akin to sonata or ritornello form. While the music’s entire content is not
revealed, the sonic portion will still be made known. A performance of a Meredith Monk musical composition in the concert hall removes the composition from its potentially multisensory context only to place it within a single-scope network context.

The reconceptualization of Monk’s music as a conventional choral concert dramatically restructures the experience of the work. While a new conceptual blend occurs within the performance venue that devalues audience interpretation, this does not necessitate the elimination of her compositions from concert settings. The performance of Monk’s compositions outside their original multidisciplinary format requires a cost benefit analysis by the conductor to assess whether the content and blend of the concert outweigh the loss of content and blend of the multidisciplinary format. The conductor must weigh all the factors, including those delineated here, of multisensory content versus suitable contexts and audience receptivity.

**Homologous Blends**

The conceptual blending model applicable to music-focused multimedia works derives strength from homologous concepts identified independently in the fields of psychology, film studies, ritual studies, music theory, music-video theory, anthropology, and philosophy. Artists are not alone in the perception of emergent structures evolving from the combination of traditional art forms. Equally, the issue of becoming and the interpretive gap is not isolated to the performative arts.

D’Aquili and Newberg’s theory of unconscious cognitive operators details an intricate neurological pathway that prompts the human mind to search for cause and effect, chaos and order, and reduction and completion relationships. Exploring why
American silent films produced more emotional response than Russian films, Lev Kuleshov stumbled upon these operators at work, creating structure where none was intended and developing new content in the presence of disjointed ideas. Alfred Hitchcock extended Kuleshov’s ideas by manipulating these emergent structures to control the reactions of his horror-movie audiences.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s concept of becoming (wasp-becoming orchid and orchid-becoming wasp) conceives of an emergent potential from an experiential realm while Fauconnier and Turner occupy a discursive, cognitive perspective. For Deleuze and Guattari, the wasp-orchid complex is a momentary creature, only in existence until the organisms disengage. The emergent structure is neither wasp nor orchid, but altogether new.

As film theorists searched for biological, neurological, or psychological mechanisms for the blending of images to create new content, Nicholas Cook developed a model of structural/ narrative difference/similarity based on metaphor theory to determine whether performances that included multiple media were actually instances of multimedia. A reading of Cook’s model suggests that only media that act autonomously, with unique frameworks, could provide a psychological gap that audiences potentially fill with content. Media with identical trajectories or structures, such as opera or musical theater, which are grounded by a central narrative, are modally redundant and unable to produce the true hallmark of a multimedia performance, an emergent structure. Heidi Peeters’ discussion of the history of music videos suggests that the industry began as a representational genre where all the involved media followed a similar structure and
developed into a genre with conflicting media structures that produced a star, her term for emergent structure.

The biological sciences appropriate emergent properties for evolutionary purposes to reconcile fish with lungs, birds with scales, and apes with thumbs. Reproduction requires two related inputs, yet the product of these sources is neither mother nor father, it is new; it is progeny. Analogous to this physiological model of reproduction is the cognitive psychology model rooted in conceptual blending that predicts the existence of neurological pathways for the conflagration of opposing or unrelated ideas into new substance. Just as the fossil record is used to measure static moments in evolutionary history, the blended structures of conceptual blending are snapshots of an experiential event. Fauconnier and Turner’s model has yet to account for the temporal experience of a conceptual blending event.

Fauconnier and Turner’s model of conceptual blending offers multidisciplinary performance theory a cognitive approach to the analysis and prediction of how multiple media interact. Unlike traditional metaphor theory where the arrow of influence flows in a single direction from object to signifier (akin to the single-scope network), Fauconnier and Turner expand their model to include a multi-directional arrow. The conceptual blending approach offers performers, conductors, and composers a methodology for developing multimedia performances and for improving the success rate of all performance experiences.
The Separation of Creator from Creation

The oeuvre of Meredith Monk from the late 20th century and early 21st century envisions an art form that is multimedia and multisensory. Monk’s multimedia works were created prior to the most recent wave of technological innovations and she continually returns to three primary forms of performance: music, theater, and dance. Contemporary multidisciplinary performances often confuse the use of multiple sources of technology in performance with the creation of a multimedia work. Screens, use of the Internet for interactivity, projections, and digital or analogue visual art do not automatically culminate in multimedia or multisensory performances. Multidisciplinary performance does not automatically equate to multimedia performance.

Monk’s productions recognize that it is the creation of emergent structures through the juxtaposition of independent media sources that establishes a work’s multimedia nature. Long relegated to the fringe, performance art compositions are now embraced by the institutions that once refused to acknowledge their value. Academia, symphony orchestras, opera houses, recital halls, conservatories, community choruses, and presenting organizations such as Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Kennedy Center all neglected the work of these artists from reaching mainstream audiences. These institutions preferred to program the classical canonic works rather than experimental performances. Late to the party, these organizations now seek new audiences and forms of revenue and turn to multidisciplinary performance as a means to connect with a digital and youthful culture. The fringe is now part of the mainstream, yet the artists who devised the theoretical underpinnings often remain unrecognized. Institutions now wield
the power of multidisciplinary performance without an understanding of how to steer the
ship, without the pioneering artists at the helm.

The greatest threat to multidisciplinary performance lies in the failure of works
created by major institutions. When a marginal artist fails, the art form regroups and
mounts a new work steeped in a revised philosophy. When an institution attempts a
multidisciplinary performance and failure occurs, the institution swears off future
projects of a similar nature and projects to its larger audience that multidisciplinary
performance as a class is without merit. While the failure of institutionalized multimedia
performance will not destroy individual performance artists, it potentially sets back the
campaign of artists such as Meredith Monk, Robert Wilson, Laurie Anderson, Marina
Abramović, and Nam June Paik to be recognized widely among the greatest artists of
their generation. While these artists are major forces in the performance art and
experimental theater, they are not viewed on the same level as contemporary composers,
choreographers, writers, and directors who dominate traditional arts such as composers
Eric Whitacre and Morten Lauridsen, choreographer Twyla Tharp, and playwrights Alan
Bennett and Tony Kushner.

For Monk, multimedia performance is a means to an end. She uses film,
projections, dance, music, and images to delve into emotional depths not possible
through traditional media alone. While the mixed-media platform can result in a
spectacle, Monk’s compositions are grounded in traditional concepts of structure,
technique, form, narrative, and emotional trajectory. As institutional art reaches for the
spectacle without the emergent content, performance artists return to open ended
combinations of traditional and physical forms of art: sound, body, and the spoken word.
The future of multidisciplinary performance does not lie in the institutionalized chorus or orchestra, rather innovation stems from individual choral artists and ensembles in conjunction with composers, choreographers, and multimedia designers who commit to continually form art that aims for multimedia and multisensory performances. While institutions may popularize and mass disseminate multidisciplinary performance, ideas and innovations emerge from those loyal to pushing boundaries.

A void exists in the choral world of ensembles dedicated to composing, performing, commissioning, and presenting multidisciplinary works. The current performance model requires the composer or choreographer to maintain an ensemble that presents their works. The limitations of this model include a restricted distribution of the work where multidisciplinary compositions remain attached to the original ensembles and artists who perform them. A culture of ensembles that commission and perform regularly frees the creator to develop multidisciplinary performances centered on the strengths of each ensemble. The composer, choreographer, or director is no longer tied to the limitations of the performers at their own disposal and are no longer financially restricted to funding the composition and the performance of their own works.

In a culture of multidisciplinary performance, groups might specialize in the fusion of specific media. Where one ensemble might excel in the performance of music and digital projections, others may have strengths in the fusion of dance and theater, animation and music, or freestanding installations. It is reasonable to imagine a culture akin to today’s choral realm, which maintains professional ensembles specializing in early music, American Music, and twentieth-century repertoire. Today’s multidisciplinary ensembles are creator driven, M5, Mark Morris Dance Company,
Cunningham Dance Company, or the Thingamajigs Performance Group. The future of multidisciplinary performance lies in a highway of ensembles that specialize in the development and performance of these compositions where creators set new works on specialized performance groups and separate creator from creation.

Limitations exist when a work is freed from its creator and original performance ensemble. The work must be optimized to accept influence from new voices, artists, and performers, yet it also must be fixed enough such that the basic content is repeatable. The result is a work that gains limited dynamic potential while assuming a more rigid structure akin to the masterworks of choral music. Multidisciplinary works must adopt the sensibilities of the contemporary dance realm where the structures of a work remain in the minds of the performers and audiences, yet the details are fluid and the content replaceable. Because of the interactive nature of his composition, Obarzanek’s Glow was performed radically differently each night. Were it to be mounted with different performers and technological engineers the “work” would again appear altered. The musical-multidisciplinary realm must create works that embrace improvisation, recomposition, and dynamic blending rather than an obsession with repeatability and control that constricts the creativity of the classical music world.

Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc

Seems these theologians down in South America were very excited because this little girl from Chile had sliced open a tomato, and the inside flesh of this tomato had actually formed a perfect

\[^{129}\] To perform an unpublished work by Meredith Monk, a member of her ensemble, M5, must be present to orally teach it.

\[^{130}\] J.S Bach’s B-minor Mass remains functionally and content-wise identical with each performance despite variations in quality; the general rhetoric of the composition is codified in the minds of performers and audiences. The B-minor Mass becomes a museum piece, beautiful to experience, yet fixed in time.
Rosary. The theologians commented that they thought this was a very impressive girl. [My wife] commented that she thought it was a very impressive tomato.\textsuperscript{131}

*Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc* is Latin for “after this, therefore because of it” and suggests that in the presence of two sequential events, the second is caused by the first. The expression encapsulates the logical fallacy that the mind relies upon to interpret multidisciplinary events. The fallacy arises because proximity via place or time is used as the primary factor to determine causality, rather than direct evidence. Neither the child who slices the ripe tomato nor the tomato itself possess any divine power, yet the operators of the mind, due to temporal proximity, derive causality from the event that came first (or simultaneously, as is the case of a toaster and burnt toast and the many instances of holy images seared in bread).

The conceptual blending model of multidisciplinary performance relies on the mind’s propensity to recontextualize proximal events. Furtive cognitive operators function outside conscious thought and beyond the ability of control. Music, dance, theater, and performance art wield this secret as currency to buy belief in the illogical fallacy, the illusory emergent structure. Meredith Monk relies upon this trickery of the mind in *Book of Days* to suggest psychological thoughts of her characters. Eva’s vision, the ritual of the crone and Eva, and the amalgamated meaning of “Plague” are all products of the mind associating sound and image as emanating from a single event when proximal evidence is the primary force.

The reterritorialization of Deleuze and Guattari’s wasp-orchid becoming mechanism is a virtual experience. It exists only when observed; in nature the wasp and orchid always remain separate entities, yet to view them in isolation prevents the wasp-

becoming-orchid-becoming-wasp process from proceeding. A similar event occurs in Monk’s *Book of Days*. The notion of the crone and Eva performing a ritual to conjure a vision exists experientially. The film presents sonic and visual stimulation side-by-side and it is Monk who convinces the mind that there is a connection between the two.

To experience multidisciplinary performance is to experience the unreal, that which exists in the mind. Yet, there exists a material component, an experiential perspective, to performance. The operators of the mind are able to create cause and effect because there is an actual moment of becoming. This dualistic understanding of multidisciplinary performance lends credence to why rituals experienced in groups remain powerful to the group members. Members share in a content that is generated for a specific time, place, and purpose in the mind and in materiality. Remove the proximal evidence and the performance or ritual disintegrates into its component parts. The experience of viewing a new release in a crowded movie theater, communal prayer, singing, processing and communion, or witnessing Meredith Monk’s *Book of Day*, Gideon Obarzanek’s *Glow*, or Robert Wilson’s *Einstein on the Beach*, all connect a community of believers in a common *sacred* text, a text that exists in the minds and bodies of these communal worshipers in the theater, concert hall, or cathedral. Drawing on cognitive operators, conceptual blending, and interpretive gaps, these communities require a willingness to believe. Artistic belief is connected to the expression of this psychological content and to the creation of the emergent structure. We believe that Eva experiences a vision, we believe that the dancers of *Glow* emit light, and we believe that we hear the signers of *Big River* speak.
The double-scope network of Fauconnier and Turner is a pathway for developing innovation and the creation of communal belief in the unreal, the emergent structure. Artists may use conceptual blending to craft works that spawn emergent structures. Creativity may be channeled away from the mirror and single-scope networks and into the co-creative mechanism of the double-scope blend. The conceptual blending operation of the double-scope network offers artists a rudimentary methodology for the creation, performance, and analysis of multimedia art. Multisensory, non-representational art, may be modeled on the experiential model of becoming drawn from the ideas of Deleuze and Guattari.

The application of conceptual blending and the notion of becoming to Meredith Monk’s Book of Days offer conductors, composers, and performers a window into the construction of multimedia and multisensory performances. Monk’s performance practices suggest that these events are greater than the simple juxtaposition of media. For Monk, they are a dynamic balance of planned and spontaneous artistic gestures. Just as Gideon Obarzanek liberated the dancer from repeating fixed movement with programed projectors in Glow, Monk liberates her performers from fixed choreographer and music. This medium fluidity arrives in the form of an emergent and non-representational artistic structure: music-becoming-dance-becoming-music. Within this liberation, space opens for an interpretive gap to emerge where audience imaginations are needed to fulfill the performance. By freeing her media from fixity, Monk creates a corporeal and imperceptible spirituality, and an intangible magic.


